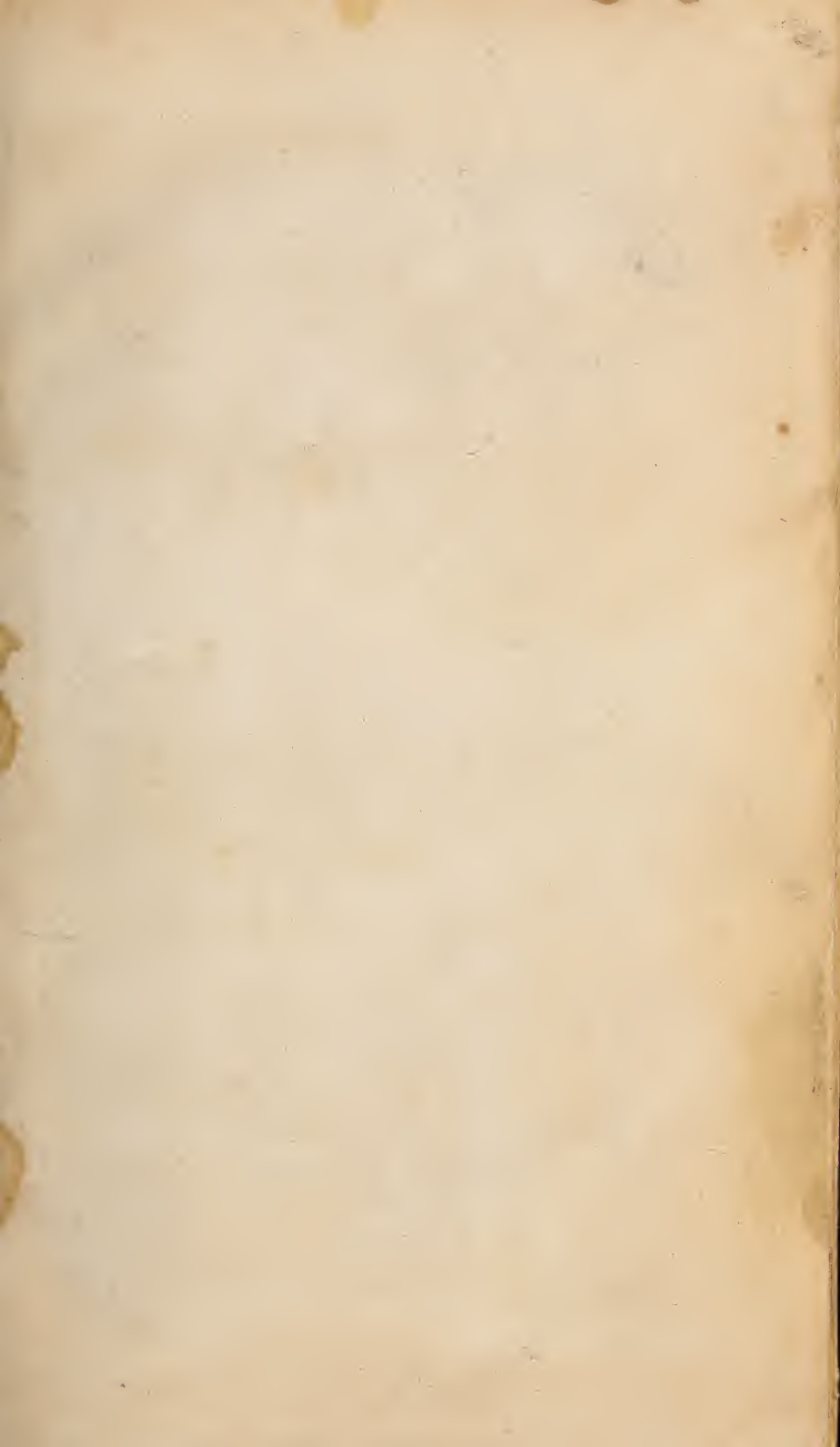




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FRONTISPIECE.



THE FALL OF BABYLON.

THE
R U I N O F R O M E ;

OR,

AN EXPOSITION UPON THE WHOLE
R E V E L A T I O N :

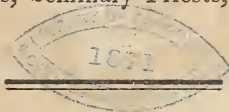
WHEREIN IS PLAINLY SHEWED AND PROVED, THAT
THE POPISH RELIGION,

TOGETHER WITH ALL

THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF ROME,

Shall decay more and more throughout all the Churches of Europe,
and shall be utterly destroyed before the end of the World.

Written especially for the comfort of Protestants, and the
daunting of Papists, Seminary Priests, and Jesuits.



PUBLISHED BY ARTHUR DENT,

Preacher of the Word of God at South-Shoobery, in Essex.

APOC. xviii. v. 7, 8.—*She saith in her heart, I sat down as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no mourning. There fore shall her plagues come at one day, death, and sorrow, and famine: and she shall be burned with fire; for that God which condemneth her is a strong Lord.*

London.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS scarce and valuable **EXPOSITION** of the **APOCALYPSE** having become doubly interesting, both from the fulfilment of most of its leading doctrines, and the efforts now making at Rome to restore the fallen dignity of the Papacy, is here presented to the Christian reader without any deviation from the unadorned and forcible language of the worthy Author; the pen of the Editor presuming only to alter a few expressions now become obsolete, and some trifling deviations from the present rules of writing.

That so plain a discovery of the sense and meaning of the sacred predictions relating to the doctrines and authority of Rome, should have been made at so distant a period, and while existing circumstances appeared so little to favour their accomplishment, is truly astonishing, and claims our serious attention to the matters discussed in this treatise; which breathes so ardent a zeal for the interests and welfare of genuine religion, and so decided and effectual an opposition to its corruptions, as must deeply affect the mind of every Christian.

Some expressions will be found in perusing these pages which the altered circumstances of the times may cause to appear too harsh and uncandid, but let the reader remember, that our worthy author's warm expressions were levelled at those priests only who assumed the garb of religion and piety for purposes of covetousness and lucre; and who, under the pretence of a disinterested devotion, devoured widows houses, and converted into a profane and gainful speculation the most sacred profession which can adorn and dignify humanity.

In the Preface our learned author has adduced several weighty arguments in favour of the perusal and diligent study of the **REVELATION**, which it has been too common to regard as a

sealed book, unfit for general use and edification. That it is, when properly discussed, capable of affording important instruction and consolation, is evident from the following pages, which are recommended to the notice and serious attention of the Christian reader, in the earnest hope they may encourage his faith and confidence in that Almighty God who careth always for his Church, and who will cause the most violent persecutions, and overwhelming troubles, to issue in its gradual improvement, and final happiness.

*This scarce and invaluable Treatise fully discusses
and elucidates these five Points :*

- I. That Babylon, in the Book of Revelation, denotes Rome.
 - II. That Rome shall fall, and in what manner.
 - II. That Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter desolation in this life, before the last judgment.
 - IV. By whom, and when it shall be overthrown.
 - V. The causes of the utter ruin and overthrow thereof.
-

Rev. 18. v. 4. I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her lagues.

THE
R U I N O F R O M E;
OR,
AN EXPOSITION UPON THE REVELATION.

Wherein is plainly shewed and proved, that the Popish Religion, together with all the Power and Authority of Rome, shall ebb and decay still more and more throughout all the Churches of Europe, and come to an utter overthrow, even in this life.

BEFORE I enter into the exposition of this prophecy, I think it not amiss to handle six circumstantial points, which may give some light to the whole matter following, which are these:

First, The person who wrote this book.

Secondly, The time when he wrote it.

Thirdly, The place where he received it.

Fourthly, The person to whom he wrote it.

Fifthly, The end and use of his writing this prophecy.

Lastly, The authority of it.

As touching the first, it is agreed upon among the soundest Divines, that John the Apostle, or Evangelist; John the Disciple, whom Jesus loved, was the author and instrument of penning this prophecy; as he himself testifieth, saying, *I am John,*

which saw these things, and heard them. And he received a commandment from Jesus Christ, which hath the keys of hell and death, that he should write the things which he had seen and heard, and set them all down together in a book. Now we all know that the testimony of John is of great weight, though he is but a man; for he is such a man as is firmly to be believed in all that he speaketh. He is an apostle, an instrument of the Holy Ghost, and so guided by the Spirit of God, that he speaketh and uttereth nothing that is his own. He was well known and approved. For we must consider, that what an apostle did utter, he uttered as the instrument of the Spirit, which cannot err. For the prophets and apostles did not write the Holy Scriptures, as they were men only; but as they were the immediate and certain instruments of the Holy Ghost, purposely chosen and set apart to pen and publish the holy books of God. This St. Peter confirmeth, saying, *Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* The apostle Paul also affirmeth the same touching his Gospel, which saith, *He was not after man, neither received he it of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* Therefore, when this our apostle saith, *I am John, which saw these things, and heard them,* he gives us to understand, that he was both an eye and an ear-witness. He bringeth not matters which he hath heard by uncertain report: he delivereth this book to the Churches; they which received it at his hands, knew him to be a most faithful servant of the Lord,

even a great apostle, who delivereth nothing but that which he had received of the Lord, and therefore he testifieth, that he saw and heard all the things which he hath written in this book. Moreover he testifieth of himself, that he was called and authorised by Jesus Christ to write this prophecy, and did nothing herein of his own imagination. For, saith he, *I, John, heard behind me a great voice, as it had been of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and that which thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the Churches.*

Here we see how John is called by Alpha and Omega, that is, by Jesus Christ, to write this doctrine of the Apocalypse. But some man may say, was not John called before? was he not one of the Lamb's twelve apostles? had he not many years executed the office of the apostleship? must he now have a new calling, and a second calling? why need he, being already an apostle, to be called and authorised again? To this I answer, that this matter now in hand was a new work, and requires a new and special calling. It is a strange revelation, and therefore requires a new authority to receive and publish it. For in this prophecy God dealeth with John as he did with the old prophets. For when he would foreshew unto any of them especial matters, he called them by glorious visions, as we may read what a goodly vision Isaiah had; how glorious a vision Ezekiel and Daniel had, even in Majesty like unto this of John. Thus then it is to be considered: John now is as one of the old prophets, to foreshow things to come; therefore the Lord appeared unto him in a

vision, and calleth him thereunto as he appeared unto them, and called them. Let this then suffice for a reason of calling John now to his new work and office. And thus much touching the first circumstance.

Now with regard to the second circumstance, which is the time when John received this prophecy, which is noted to be upon the Lord's-day. It is the day which St. Paul to the Corinthians calleth the first day of the week; in which the Churches met for religious exercises; which is also evident, because he saith, they came together to break bread. Now the observation of a seventh day is of Divine institution, even from the beginning. It is natural, moral, and perpetual: for God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it. We are therefore to think, that although John, now in his exile, was absent in body from the Church assemblies, yet he was present with them in spirit; commending them most earnestly unto God in his holy prayers and meditations: and therefore it is said, that he was ravished in the spirit upon the Lord's-day. So we read, that the like befel unto Daniel, when he was a prisoner in Babylon; the like befel unto Ezekiel, who was taken by the Spirit in the visions of God, and carried to Jerusalem; the like to Peter; the like to Paul.

But the reason of John's ravishment in the Spirit, at this time, was, that thereby he might be made more fit and capable to receive and understand all those great mysteries and heavenly visions which now should be shewed unto him. And withal let us observe, that all men are always most capable of

heavenly things when they are most in the Spirit: for God doth evermore most reveal himself to such as are most in prayer, reading, and meditation; and to such as make greatest conscience to spend his Sabbaths christianly and religiously, according to his great cominandment. And let us always be sure of this, that the more fervent and zealous we are in religious duties, the more familiar acquaintance we shall find with God; and he will at all times be the more gracious unto us, and will hide nothing from us that may be for his glory, and our good. For such as are much in heavenly contemplation he doth not reckon among his servants, but among his dearest friends, to whom he will make known all things that he hath heard of his Father.

Let us now proceed to the third circumstance. The third circumstance is the place where John received this prophecy, and that is set down to be the Isle of Patmos, which (as the geographers write,) is a little desart island lying in the Icarian Sea, wherein it is reported that John the Apostle was banished by the Emperor Domitian, about the year of our Lord 96, and there received, and wrote this book of the Apocalypse; where note by the way, that there is no place so obscure or vast, wherein a godly mind may not aspire unto heaven, and receive a greater abundance of supernatural things: for Daniel in prison, Peter in a tanner's house, Paul in a broken ship, received a superabundant measure of grace, more to be esteemed than all the gold of India. Some write, that this Isle of Patmos is accounted among the islands called Sporados, which lie over against Asia,

and the city of Ephesus, and was in the sight both of Europe and Africa ; so that it seemed to be, as it were, a middle seat, or holy chair, out of the which Christ preached, by John, from heaven to the whole world. And indeed the counsels of God are wonderful, and his goodness unspeakable, which revealeth so great mysteries to his faithful servants, as it were out of the Romish prison, and Babylonical captivity.

Moreover, John declareth the cause of his coming into the same island : for he saith, he was there for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ ; that is, for the preaching and constant profession of the gospel of Christ.

History mentions, that John was apprehended in Asia, and sent prisoner to Rome, that he might plead his cause before the Emperor Domitian, who most savagely and cruelly condemned the innocent, and caused him to be put into a cauldron of boiling oil, out of which, when he, by miraculous providence, escaped without harm, he was banished to the Isle of Patmos.

But immediately after John's banishment, God visited with a just punishment this persecuting Emperor Domitian. For in the fifteenth year of his reign he was cruelly and most shamefully murdered by his own servants. And thus much for the third circumstance.

Now it followeth to speak of the fourth circumstance, which is, the persons to whom this prophecy is written ; and who are said, in the first chapter and first verse, to be all the servants of God. As many, therefore, as are the servants of God, must attend

unto this book; hear it, read it, and remember it: for to all such it is dedicated by the Holy Ghost; to all such it belongeth; for all such it is written and recorded.

Some do falsely and foolishly imagine, that it was given only to John, and that it might likewise be given to some special men, as to some great scholars or learned divines, who could tell how to use it, and how to wield it. But we see how grossly they err: for the Holy Ghost saith, it belongeth to all the servants of God. And, moreover, John is willed and commanded to write all the things which he saw in sundry visions in a book together, and to send it to the seven Churches which is in Asia; because the Lord would have it remain in perfect record unto the use of the whole Church, both that the Church might be in possession of this book, and also that it might be a faithful witness unto the end of the world, that this book was written and penned by John the Apostle, of whose truth and sincerity the Church had sufficient experience.

True it is, indeed, that there are but seven Churches named, but under these seven Churches all others are comprehended. It had been an infinite matter to reckon up all the particular Churches which were then in the world, and to have explained their several situations; therefore, under these seven Churches of Asia, and their particular and several estates, the state of the universal Church militant is laid open. I conclude, therefore, that the whole doctrine of St. John's Revelation appertaineth to the universal Church of Christ throughout all the

world, and in all times and ages since it was written and recorded. And that as all Scripture is written for our instruction and comfort, and as all Scripture, given by Divine inspiration, is profitable to teach and convince, &c. so this book of the Apocalypse is written for the special comfort and instruction of the Church in these last days. And so I conclude this fourth point.

The fifth point to be considered is, the end and use of this prophecy, which is to publish and blaze abroad the thing which must shortly come to pass, that is, all things prophesied in this book, and to be fulfilled even to the end of the world. And whereas he saith that these things must come to pass, he meaneth us to understand how great the stability and certainty of God's determination is. For look what things are ordained by God's determinate purpose; they are altogether unchangeable: for the Lord is God, and he is not changed. And he saith, *My determination shall stand*, Mal. iii. 6. And Christ saith, *Heaven and earth shall pass away*, &c. Matt. xxiv. 35. It is therefore most certain, that every particular thing contained in this prophecy shall be fulfilled in God's appointed time. For God hath disclosed these things to his Son, Christ, not to the end that he should shut them up again in himself, but that he should shew them forth to the godly,—that the whole Church might fare the better by them. It therefore becomes us all to enquire and search-into these things which must so shortly come to pass, that thereby we may be strengthened and comforted against all future dangers. And Christ

saith, *Behold I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy, &c.* Rev. xxii. 7. But how shall we keep them, except we know them? and how shall we know them, except we read and study them? If, therefore, we mean to be partakers of this blessedness, we must not only esteem this book to be very profitable, but absolutely necessary for all the servants of God to be exercised in. And if ever there were any time wherein it behoveth to set forth, to urge, and to preach this doctrine to all the people of God, then it is chiefly necessary to be done in this our time: for this age of ours hath in the Pope's kingdom many sharp and quick wits, which commend with wonderful praises both the Pope and the Popish Church, and buzz into the ears of unlearned people many things quite contrary to the excellent doctrine of the holy Scriptures. The Jesuits and Priests are grown exceedingly crafty and cunning. The Papists are rich, wealthy, and full of armour and munition. Popery seems to make a head again, and the Papists look for successful days. It therefore becomes us, who love Christ and his gospel, that we should be well-appointed, and thoroughly armed against them: and, for this purpose, the Revelation of St. John is of great use and necessity.

As I said before, so I say again, that it is the prophecy of our time, written to this special end, that by it we might be both forewarned and forearmed. If we seriously consider the whole matter of this book, we shall easily find out the use and end of it:

for the excellent matter of it doth argue the excellent end and use of it.

Now then, as concerning the general matter of this book: here are to be found very large and lively descriptions of the most glorious person of Christ, and all his excellent offices, both of King, Priest, and Prophet; and also most notable descriptions of the Church, and of its ministers; and of the persecutions and afflictions which it must of necessity pass through in the world. Also God's merciful providence for his Church, and most vigilant care over it in the midst of all its persecutions. Here are set before our eyes, very lively descriptions of the Churches' deadly enemies; both of Satan himself, and his three great instruments—the Roman Emperor, the Pope, and the Turk.

Here are set down all the cruel persecutions which the Church must suffer, and the total overthrow of its persecutors in the end. Here are described, hell, death, the resurrection, and the last judgment. Here, also, the very kingdom of heaven is at large described; with all those great rewards, infinite glory, and endless felicity which remain for all the faithful worshippers of God.

I conclude, therefore, that as the contents of this prophecy are of such an excellent nature, the use and necessity of it must of course be very great. And for this reason John is willed and commanded, by Alpha and Omega, to write the things which he had seen, the things that were, and the things that shall come hereafter. By the things which he had seen, is

meant that glorious vision mentioned in the first chapter; wherein Jesus Christ did appear unto him in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, in most glorious manner, as is there described. And all this was in the Isle of Patmos, where John was first called and authorised to this work; and therefore he is commanded, first of all, to record this vision which he had already seen.

By the things that are, he meaneth the present state of the seven Churches of Asia, which were then the most flourishing Churches in the world, as they are described in the second and third chapters; and in them the state of all other Churches.

By the things that shall be, he meaneth all the propheties of this book, which were to be fulfilled in their time; and all those strange accidents which should come to pass in process of time; and the several ages of the Church, even unto the end of the world. Thus we see how John received a precise commandment from the Son of God to write things past, present, and to come, that they might stand in record unto all posterity, from generation to generation. Thus much touching the fifth circumstance, which is the end and use of this book.

Now followeth to speak of the last circumstantial point, which is the authority of this prophecy, which is strongly confirmed from the Author of it, and that is Jesus Christ; and therefore it is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him. And again it is written, *Jesus sent mine angel to testify these things in the Churches*, Rev. xxii. 16.

Here we see plainly, that Jesus Christ, the very

Son of God, the Alpha and the Omega, is the author of this book, for he subscribes his name unto it, and sets his hand and seal unto it. Needs, therefore, must the authority of it be very great which cometh from so great a personage: for look what dignity and authority he is of from whom the book cometh; and of the same dignity and authority is the book itself.

Another strong argument to confirm the authority of this book, may be taken from the protestation of Jesus Christ, in these words: *I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these sayings, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life*, Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Here we see how Jesus Christ maketh the authority of this book equal to any other of the oracles of God, to which it is not lawful for any man to add or detract, under pain of condemnation. It maketh much also for the authority of this book, that St. John doth so often repeat, reiterate, and inculcate his own name: I John the Apostle, I John the Evangelist, I John the Divine: shewing, by all these repetitions, how needful a thing it was that the faithful should be thoroughly instructed who he was, even one of the Lamb's twelve Apostles, and therefore to do away with all suspicion and doubt concerning the authority of this book, and not once to imagine it to be any invention of man, or feigned device, since it was penned by so great an apostle.

Moreover, the authority of this prophecy is confirmed by four reasons, given in the last chapter. The first is the affirmation of the angel; who saith, *The words are faithful and true.* The second is the authority of the most high God himself, in these words, *The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel, to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be fulfilled.* The third is the testimony of Jesus, who pronounced them blessed which keep the words of this prophecy. For, saith he, *Behold I come shortly: blessed is he that keepeth the words of this prophecy.* The fourth and last is the witness of John, in these words, *I am John, which heard and saw these things.* Now it may be demanded, what is the cause that here there are so many things heaped up for the confirmation of the authority of this book. Surely we must think here is some special cause and reason for it. For the Holy Ghost doth not use to deal so much and so earnestly in a matter but upon great cause. We may easily gather what the cause is. The book painteth out the whore of Babylon, and the whole kingdom of the great Antichrist, together with all Satan's cunning and slight therein; and for this cause Satan hath laboured especially to weaken the credit and authority of this book. He by some means, in old time, prevailed thus far, that even among some Churches of true Christians the authority and truth of it was doubted of. The Holy Ghost did well foresee this practice of Satan, and therefore bringeth the more reasons for the confirmation thereof. If the credit and authority of

this book should never have been impeached, there needed not any such special confirmation. But now (God be thanked,) there is no question or controversy concerning the authority of this prophecy. It is received as authentic, by the common consent of all the Churches. Almost all the ancient fathers do acknowledge it to be canonical. The new writers do, with one voice, give their consent and approbation unto it. The Papists themselves do acknowledge it to be the sacred and undoubted word of God; though, of all Scriptures, they cannot endure it should be meddled withal, because it cutteth them so near the bone. Moreover, it must not be omitted, that God is called the Lord God of the holy Prophets; which proveth that this prophecy is of equal authority with the prophesies which were of old, inasmuch as the same God is the author of it. And this book is to be held in the same account with the books of Moses, and of the Prophets; for all things in it shall as certainly be fulfilled as the predictions of Moses and the Prophets were. In Isaiah, in Jeremiah, in Ezekiel, in Daniel, and in the rest, we find many things which the Lord foretold, by them, long before they came to pass. Even so there be many things fore-shewed, and fore-prophesied in this book, which, in their time, shall be assuredly fulfilled. Nay, we see and know, that many things here foretold are already fulfilled; and some things are come to pass even in these our days. He that shall look into the times that are past since this prophecy was given, shall find that all things have fallen out agreeable to the prophecy

of this book. And, surely, if there were none other thing to persuade us touching the authority thereof, his might suffice, that every thing has fallen out exactly as this prophecy did foreshew. It is our great negligence that we do not clearly see so much. And I do humbly entreat all the people of God to look more diligently and narrowly into it in all times to come. And thus much concerning the circumstances.

Now, as concerning the book itself, it may very properly be divided into three divisions, as it were into three general parts. The first vision is contained in the three first chapters. The second vision is contained in the next eight chapters following, from the fourth to the twelfth chapter. And the last vision is contained in all the chapters following, from the twelfth to the end.

As concerning the first vision, my purpose is not to enlarge much upon it, because it is plain and easy to understand, and because it contains no prophecies of things to come, but only opens the present state of the Church at that time; and also because I have already touched the sum of it in the handling the circumstantial points: I will therefore content myself with a very brief opening and expounding of it, beginning at the first chapter

CHAP. 1.

THE first chapter containeth four principal things, viz.

The title of the book.

The salutation of the Churches.

The manner of John's calling to receive this prophecy.

The description of Christ, the person that called him.

The title of the book is set down in these words, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him.*

It containeth three things: First, the Author of the book, which is Jesus Christ, receiving it from God the Father.

Secondly, the end and use of this book, which is, to shew unto all the servants of God the things which must shortly be done.

Thirdly, the singular fruit and benefit which the Church shall receive by it, in these words, *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, &c.*

The salutation is in these words, *John to the seven Churches which are in Asia, grace be with you, and peace, &c.* It contains a description of the Trinity, or three persons in the Godhead. The Father is described of his eternity, namely, to be him which is, which was, and which is to come.

The Holy Ghost is described of his divers gifts and operations, and therefore is called the Seven Spirits which are before the Throne, or which

proceed from the Throne: but St. John speaketh here of the Holy Ghost, according to the vision shewed him in the fifth chapter, where Christ is said to have seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent into the world. Of which more will be said hereafter.

Jesus Christ is described in his three great offices, of King, Priest, and Prophet, and also by his glorious power and eternity.

First, touching his kingly office, he is called the Prince of the kings of the earth, that is, King of kings, for he is a King of Sion. He is a King to rule and govern his Church. He must reign over all his enemies; and in the midst of his enemies, even till he have trod them all under his feet. And this benefit we have by it, that we are made kings in him, in this life to reign over our corrupt affections, and after this life to reign as crowned kings for ever with him, in infinite glory and endless felicity.

Secondly, touching his Priesthood: he is said to love us, and wash us from our sins in his blood. For he is our only High Priest, who by his own blood hath once entered into the holy place, and obtained eternal redemption for us. He only it is which, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself, without fault, to God, to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. So then by virtue of his Priesthood and sacrifice, we are reconciled unto God, have free access to the throne of grace, and are made priests in him to offer our spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through him

For he hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father, Rev. i. 6.

Thirdly, concerning his prophetical office, he is called that faithful Witness: for he said to Pilate, *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth, John xviii. 37.* And the Apostle saith, *He witnesseth under Pontius Pilate a good confession.* So then Jesus Christ is one of those *three great witnesses which bear record in heaven.* Jesus Christ is the Prince of prophets, even that great Prophet that should come into the world, through whom all the counsels of God are revealed to us. He is that only-begotten Son, which is come down from the bosom of his Father, and hath made known unto us whatsoever he hath received of his Father.

He, both by his doctrine, life, and miracles, hath borne witness unto the truth; and, by virtue of his prophetical office, the whole will of God is made known unto us. For God hath sent him as the great Prophet, to instruct the world in righteousness; and hath revealed himself to us in him: and therefore he is called *The image of God, the brightness of his glory, and the engraven form of his person.* And therefore he said to Philip, *He that hath seen me, hath seen my Father also. And if you had known me, you should have known my Father also, John xiv. 9.*

And again, *No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him, Matt. xi. 27.*

Thus we see that Jesus Christ is that faithful

witness, and Prince of prophets, by whom the will of God, and the counsels of his Father are revealed unto us.

The manner of John's calling to receive this prophecy is set down in these words: *I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the Isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ: and I was ravished in the Spirit on the Lord's-day, and heard behind me a great voice, as it had been of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and that which thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia, &c.* Rev. l. 9-11.

Now, out of these three verses five things are to be observed:

First, That John is commanded by the voice of Christ, which he heard behind him as loud as a trumpet, to write and record the visions which he saw; and being so written and recorded, to commend them to all the Churches, for the common benefit and use thereof. So that herein John doth nothing of himself, nothing of his own authority, but all things by special warrant and commission from Jesus Christ, and that Alpha and Omega which doth call him, and authorise him to this great business which now he is set about.

Secondly, John's ravishment in spirit, to the end he might be made more capable of receiving all these heavenly visions which were shewed unto him.

Thirdly, His great humiliation, whereby also he

was fitted to receive and understand these great mysteries. *For God will guide the meek in judgment, and teach the humble his ways; yea, his secrets are with them that fear him,* Psalm xxv. 9. Therefore, although John was a great apostle, and had seen wonderful visions, yet he is not thereby puffed up with pride and conceit of himself, but, in the greatest humiliation of his soul calleth himself *a brother and companion of all the faithful, but especially of such as patiently suffer for Jesus Christ and his kingdom.*

Fourthly, The time when John was called, which was the Lord's-day.

Fifthly and lastly, The place where he was called, which was the Isle of Patmos, as formerly hath been shewed.

The description of Christ, the person that called John to this new office, is set down in the next five verses following, wherein the excellent glory of Christ's person is described. First, from the place where Christ did appear unto him. Secondly, from the several parts and members of his royal person. Thirdly, from his provident care over his true ministers, and all his faithful people.

Touching the place where Christ, in a vision, did appear to John, he saith it was *in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.* For, saith he, *I turnea my back to see the voice that spake with me, and when I was turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like the Son of man, &c.*

The seven golden candlesticks are interpreted by

Christ himself, in the last verse of the chapter, to be the seven Churches. The Churches are said to be of gold, because Christ delighteth in them as we do in gold; he valueth every true member thereof as we do gold: for every believer is all-glorious within; every true Christian is very fair and beautiful; every regenerate man is as gold, even as most pure gold.

It is said afterward, that Christ walketh *in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*; that is, he is always present with his Church, to feed it, govern it, defend it, and comfort it.

The Prophet saith that Christ hath seven eyes, which go through the whole world; whereby is signified his watchful providence for his Church: for he is always looking out for the good of it, to defend and protect it against all adversary power. Which thing was figured in the rams skins wherewith all the ark was covered, to defend it against all violence of wind and weather. Even so is the merciful protection of Christ, for the continual covering of his Church.

As touching the parts and members of his royal Person, he is described of his head and hair, of his face, of his eyes, of his voice, of his feet, of his garments, and of his girdle.

As concerning his head and hair, they are said to be *as white as wool, and as snow*, which signifieth his great wisdom, and knowledge to perform all things in his Church: for wisdom and knowledge, for the most part, are supposed to accompany white heads and grey hairs.

His face shineth as the sun in his strength: which
No. 2. E

signifieth, that Christ is the same to his Church as the sun is to the world. For as the sun lighteth the whole world with his brightness, so Christ with the brightness of his face enlighteneth his whole Church.

His eyes are like a flame of fire: that is, exceedingly bright, and piercing into all places, even into the very heart of men; for nothing is hid from his sight. He hath eagles' eyes, to foresee all dangers intended and plotted against his Church, that he may in due time prevent them.

His voice is compared *to the sound of many waters*, because it should sound throughout all the world, by the preaching of the gospel. *Waters* is expounded, chapter xvii. 15. of multitudes, nations, and tongues. Christ's voice, therefore, is like many waters, because his voice should go through many countries and kingdoms.

His feet are compared to *fine brass*, to signify both the perfection of all his ways, and also his mighty power to tread down all his enemies.

He is clothed in a garment down to the ground, to signify that he walked as King and Priest in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. For kings and priests, in old time, did wear long garments, especially in the execution of their offices.

He is girded about the paps with a golden girdle; for as kings and priests did gird their garments, to prevent their being in the way in the performance of their offices, so Christ girdeth himself close to his business; for he is no idle beholder of the state of his Church, but is continually engaged in the advancement and protection of it.

Concerning his provident care over his faithful ministers, he is said to carry them in his right hand: *for he had in his right hand seven stars*; that is, the ministers of the Churches.

As Christ saith, *The seven stars are the angels*; that is, the ministers of the seven Churches. Ministers are compared to stars, because they should shine as bright stars in this dark world, both by life and doctrine.

Christ is said to hold them in his right hand, because he always defended them against the malice and fury of the world, which of all others is most outrageously bent against them and their favourites.

But let men take heed of being over-bold, in presuming to pull the stars out of Christ's right hand, for they will have serious cause to repent the attempt. The world is very busy this way; they think to force them out of his hands; but, alas, poor souls, they are not able, he holdeth too fast: who can pull them out of his right hand?

Another reason why Christ is said to hold the seven stars in right hand, is because he worketh by them and their ministry, as an artificer with his tool in his right hand. The things which Christ hath done by these instruments, are glorious and admirable: for by the ministry of the gospel he hath converted many sinners, and saved many souls, than the which nothing can be more honourable and wonderful. And therefore the word of God, which is the minister's weapon, is compared to *a sharp two-edged sword, which came out of Christ's mouth*. Now unto all this may be added, that Christ saith, *He*

was dead, but now alive; because he died, and rose again. And also that he saith, *He had the keys of hell and death*: that is, authority and power over hell and damnation. For he hath absolute power over hell and damnation. He hath absolute power to open and shut, bind and loose; and therefore it is written, *He hath the key of David, which openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth*. All this setteth forth the great power and glory of Christ's person; and all aimeth at this mark and end, to commend unto us the authority of this book, because it cometh from a person of so great dignity and excellency.

Last of all, it remaineth to shew how John was affected by this vision, wherein Christ did so gloriously appear unto him: for he saith, *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead*. Wherein he sheweth how greatly he was amazed and daunted with the sight of Christ's most glorious personage. He was struck with such fear and astonishment, that scarcely any life or spirit remained in him: and all this was to humble him, and to strike him down even to the ground, inasmuch as by it he findeth his own weakness and imperfection; being incapable of enduring the dazzling splendour of such a glorious sight. It was, no doubt, profitable, or rather necessary, that this holy servant of God should thus be humbled, and made fit to receive this Revelation with the greater reverence from his great Lord and Master. And also it maketh much for our profit, as appeareth in that every part of this vision is rehearsed in the Epistles to the Churches.

But, to conclude, John being thus humbled and cast down in himself, is comforted and raised up by Christ, *who laid his right hand on him, and commanded him to fear nothing.* For, saith he, *I am the first and the last, and am alive, but I was dead; behold I am alive for evermore.* In which words he doth greatly cheer up John's heart; and telleth him plainly, that this might and terror of his person is bent only against the wicked enemies of his Church, nothing at all against the friends thereof; but, on the contrary, that all this power and glory, might and majesty, is wholly and altogether for the good of his Church. Wherein we may all clearly see and know, to our great comfort, that the same arm of God which casteth down the wicked, raiseth up the godly; the same power which woundeth them, healeth us. For whatsoever is in God, is wholly for his, and wholly against those that are none of his. And thus much concerning the first chapter shall suffice

CHAP. II. AND III.

I have thought proper to place these two chapters together, and in a general and compendious manner to set down the most special matters contained in them both; not meaning to insist upon every particular, because both these chapters are plain and easy to be understood, and also because they have been sufficiently treated upon by others. These two chapters do generally contain seven

epistles, written to the seven Churches of Asia : wherein the present state of the Churches of Asia is very lively described ; and, in them, the state of all other Churches then existing upon the face of the earth.

Every one of these seven epistles containeth four things, viz.

First, An exordium or entrance into the matters.

Secondly, A general proposition.

Thirdly, A narration.

Lastly, A conclusion.

The exordium, or entrance of every epistle containeth two things : namely, the person to whom the epistle is written, and the person from whom the epistle is written.

The proposition is one and the same in all these epistles, contained in these words, *I know thy works.*

The narration containeth the matter of each epistle, and consisteth of commendations and censures ; of admonitions, reprehensions, threats, and promises.

The conclusion of every epistle is one and the same, in these words, *Let him that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.*

First, Concerning the person to whom these epistles are sent ; he is named in the beginning of every epistle *to be the angel of such and such a Church.* By this word angel, he does not mean the invisible spirits which we call the angels of heaven, for the things attributed to these angels can in no-wise agree to the invisible spirits, as to be angels of

several Churches, to be neither hot nor cold, to leave their first love, to repent and amend, and sundry such like attributes through all these epistles. But, by the word angel, he meaneth the minister or pastor of every Church ; which, therefore, is called an angel, because he is the minister of God, as the word signifieth : as also because every faithful minister ought to be received and regarded as an angel of God, as the Apostle witnesseth of the Galatians, that *they received him as an angel of God, yea, as Christ Jesus*. And he giveth many admonitions in his epistles to this effect ; for he would have all faithful ministers to be greatly revered, and held in double honour ; to be acknowledged and held in singular love for their works sake ; to be treated respectfully, to be made much of, and to want nothing ; for, indeed, a good minister is a jewel of high price. A good minister is as a friend in court, which we say is better than a penny in purse. A good minister is like a candle, which wasteth itself to give light to others. A good minister is like a cock, who by the clapping of his wings awaketh himself, and by his crowing awaketh others. For a good minister, by his private studies, prayers, and meditations, awaketh himself, and by his public preaching awaketh others. The Scriptures affirmeth a good minister to be the very glory of Christ : and again, that a good minister is a singular blessing of God. For the Lord himself saith, *I will take you one of a city, and two of a tribe, and will bring you to Zion ; and I will give you a pastor according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and*

understanding, Jer. iii. 14. Now then, if a good minister be so great a blessing of God, and a jewel of such matchless price, how great is the sin of those who condemn them, and tread their ministry under foot, as vile and nothing worth? Our Lord Jesus saith of all such, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me*. Let those scoffers and scorners, therefore, take heed how they despise Christ, for assuredly he will not long permit their iniquity to pass unpunished.

If any man demand a reason why all these epistles are specially sent and directed to the angels or pastors of the Churches, seeing John before, chap. i. 11. is commanded to write them to the Churches of Asia, I answer, that his writing to the pastor excludeth not the Churches; but in them, or under them, he writeth to the whole of the Churches, as it plainly appeareth in the conclusion of every epistle, when he saith, *Let him that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches*. Then that which is spoken to the angel of the Church, is spoken to the Church.

The reason why the speech is specially directed to the pastor of every Church is, because the good or bad state of the Church, for the most part, dependeth upon the ministers; for, commonly, we see the example of the pastor followed by the flock. And as the prophet saith, *Like priest, like people*. For we may observe in all these epistles, that where the minister is commended, the people are commended; and where the minister is censured, the people are censured also. So that they stand or fall, sink or swim together.

As concerning the person from whom these epistles

are sent, it is Jesus Christ, who is very gloriously described of his divers qualities in the entrance of every one of these epistles. First, in the epistle to the Church of Ephesus, it is said, *These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and which walketh in the midst of the seven candlesticks.* Secondly, in the epistle to the Church of Smyrna: *These things, saith he, is the first and last; which was dead, and is alive.* Thirdly, to the Church of Pergamos: *Thus saith he which hath a sharp sword with two edges.* Fourthly, to Thyatira: *These things saith the Son of God, who hath eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass.* Fifthly, to the Church of Sardis: *These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and seven stars.* Sixthly, to the Church of Philadelphia, it is thus said of Christ: *These things saith he that is holy and true, which hath the key of David, which openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.* Lastly, to Laodicea it is thus said: *These things saith Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creatures.*

Now then we plainly see how gloriously Jesus Christ is described of his several properties in every one of these epistles, and what honourable and magnificent titles are given unto him; and all to this end, to move attention, and to work in us a reverence for so Divine a Personage, that we might more seriously regard, and deeply ponder the things which proceed from so great a Majesty. For we see and know by common experience, that almost every man's words are heeded and regarded accord

ing to the opinion and reverence which is had of his person. Since then that every one of these epistles, fronted with this great authority, *Thus saith the Son of God ; Thus saith Christ ; Thus saith Alpha and Omega* : therefore we ought to give diligent heed to the things herein contained. So likewise we read in the Hebrews, that after the Holy Ghost had described the person of Jesus Christ, and extolled him far above the angels, and all other creatures: he giveth the use of it in the beginning of the second chapter, saying, *Therefore we ought to give more diligent heed to his doctrine.* And thus much concerning the exordium, or entrance of these epistles, touching the person to whom, and the person from whom these epistles are sent.

Now it followeth to speak a word or two of the general proposition contained in these words, *I know thy works.* We read in all these epistles, how the Son of God praises some of the Churches, and censures others; commends some pastors, and blames others. Now he that will praise, or dispraise, must especially look to this, that he be upon a good ground; and therefore Jesus Christ, before he enters into any praising or dispraising, commending or reproving, doth first protest that he knoweth their works, and is privy to all their particular actions, even their very thoughts; and therefore cannot err, or be deceived in his censures. True it is, indeed, that men may err in their opinions and censures of others, because they know not men's hearts, and with what affections things are carried. Men, I say, may praise or dispraise too much or too little.

but Jesus Christ, whose eyes are a flame of fire, and which searcheth the reins, cannot fail in the least point, not err a hair's breadth, as we say, either in commending or reproof, and therefore they are effectually silenced, so as they can have nothing to reply, when he saith, *I know thy works*. I know well enough what thou art, and what thou hast been : I am not deceived in thee, I know thy sitting down and rising up, and am accustomed to all thy ways. And this briefly of the proportion.

The narration (as is aforesaid) contained the matter of the epistles, consisting of praises and dispraises, admonitions, reprehensions, threats, and promises.

Touching the first, we find that some Churches are wholly commended, others wholly discommended ; others, partly commended, partly discommended. As for example, the pastor and people of Smyrna and Philadelphia, are generally commended for all things, and discommended for nothing : there is no fault found with them ; that is, no gross fault, as in others : for they were not without common corruptions and infirmities. The minister of Smyrna was a very rare and excellent man, although a poor man in the estimation of the world. For Christ saith thus unto him : *I know thy poverty, but thou art rich*, Rev. ii. 9 ; that is, rich in grace, and the manifold gifts of the Spirit. Thou hast done great service to the Church. Thou hast employed thy gifts to the good of many. Thou takest great pains in the ministry, and art greatly blessed in thy labours, for thou hast an excellent flock, a

notable good people; and therefore I cannot but greatly commend both thee and them. The minister of Philadelphia was also a very worthy and notable man: for although his gifts were not so great as some others, yet was he very diligent and faithful in a little; of whom it is said, *Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name*; that is, thou art very constant in the profession and practice of the Christian religion. And thereupon Christ promised to bless his labours. For, saith he, *I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which call themselves Jews and are not, but do lie: behold, I say, I will make them that they shall come and worship before thy feet, and shall know that I have loved thee.*

Here we plainly see how Christ promiseth to bless this man's ministry for his industry and diligence, although he was not possessed of the greatest gifts. For men of the greatest gifts are not always most blessed in their labours. For God doth commonly work the greatest things by weakness, that all the glory might redound unto him, and that no flesh might boast in his sight. For, otherwise, if men of the greatest gifts should always be most blessed in their labours, and win most souls unto God, then we would be ready to ascribe that to men and their gifts, which is proper unto God, and so his praise and glory should be somewhat eclipsed.

Thus we see what excellent men the ministers of Smyrna and Philadelphia were, and what excellent people they had in their charge. But, on the contrary, the pastor and the people of Sardis and Lao-

dicea are discommended for all things, and commended for nothing. Indeed the minister of Sardis had a great name for learning, and other good gifts, but he was grown very idle and negligent, and did little good with his gifts. Of whom it is said, *Thou hast a name that thou livest, but thou art dead.* That is, there was no spirit in him, no life of grace, his gifts waxed rusty for want of use, he was fallen asleep, he was fallen away from the grace of God, and was not the man which he had been. Therefore he is admonished to awake, and strengthen the things which remain, which were ready to die.

The minister of Laodicea, and the people also, were grown luke-warm, neither hot nor cold; they were become careless and secure, not caring greatly which end went forward in God's matters, so they might enjoy the present profit and pleasures of this life.

Concerning the pastors and people of Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira, they are partly commended, and partly discommended. These three were reasonable good ministers, and had many good parts in them, and took pains in their charges, although there be some faults found with them. For the minister of Ephesus is commended for six things: for labour, for patience, for zeal, for wisdom, for sincerity, and for courage; but discommended for leaving his first love, that is, for revolting, or somewhat going back, or rather, indeed, for cooling in the love and zeal for God. The minister of Pergamos, and people also, are greatly commended for their constant profession of the truth in the midst of

manifold troubles, and the very heat of persecution. For the rage of the enemies grew so fierce against the profession, and professors of the gospel, that Antipas, the pastor of Pergamos (as some suppose), was put to death. For Christ saith thus of his Church: *Thou dwellest even where Satan's seat is, and yet thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth*, Rev. ii. 13.

But yet, notwithstanding this Church is found fault withal for some few things, that is, two gross faults; the one for suffering the doctrine of Balaam to be introduced there by the instruments of Satan; the other, that they maintained the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. The doctrine of Balaam did uphold the lawfulness of eating things sacrificed to idols, and of committing fornication: for he taught Balak, the king of Moab, thus to put a sumbling-block before the children of Israel. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes did uphold the common use of women, that is, that women might be made common. These two most gross and absurd doctrines were suffered and maintained in the Church of Pergamos.

As concerning the Church of Thyatira, they are greatly commended for their love and service to the Church; for their faith, patience, and manifold works; and especially for their proceeding in religion and godliness, and that with increase. For of this Church it is said, *I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and the last to be more than the first*, Rev. ii. 19. But this Church

is discommended for suffering the wicked woman Jezabel, (that is, a false prophetess, who had craftily crept into this Church,) to teach and seduce the people of God in that congregation; teaching the same false doctrine that Balaam did at Pergamos, which was, that it was lawful to commit fornication, and to eat meats sacrificed unto idols.

Hitherto concerning the praises and censures of the Church. Now followeth to speak of the admonitions.

First, the Church of Ephesus having fallen from their first love, is admonished to remember from whence they were fallen, to repent, and to do their first works. Also the Church of Smyrna is admonished, and exhorted to stand fast in the midst of those persecutions and troubles which should be raised up against it by the emperor Trajan, and continue for the space of ten years. They are therefore exhorted and encouraged by our Lord Jesus not to fear the things which they should suffer; for, although the Devil and his instruments should have scope to persecute and imprison them for ten days, (that is, ten years, according to prophetic account,) yet, if they will continue faithful to the death, they should have the crown of life.

The Church of Pergamos, suffering and maintaining the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes, is admonished to repent and amend.

The Church of Thyatira, which suffered the false doctrine of Jezabel, is admonished to look to herself, and to hold fast the truth of religion.

Sardis, being dull and dead, is admonished to

awake and strengthen the things which remain, that were ready to die.

Philadelphia is admonished to hold that which they had, that no man take their crown.

Laodicea, being neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, is admonished to be zealous, and amend.

And although they thought their state good enough, being puffed up with conceit, yet are they declared to be poor, naked, and blind; and thereupon counselled and admonished to buy spiritual gold that they may be rich, and spiritual garments to hide their nakedness, and spiritual eye-salve to anoint their eyes that they may see.

Concerning reprehensions, Ephesus is reprovèd for going backward.

Pergamos and Thyatira, for suffering and maintaining corrupt doctrines, as formerly hath been shewed.

Sardis, for dulness, deafness, and unsoundness in their manner of worshipping God.

Laodicea, for being lukewarm and conceited.

Touching threats. Ephesus is threatened, that, except they repent, and do their first works, their candlestick should be removed out of its place; that is, the Church should be stranslated to some other place, but not destroyed. God doth remove, but not destroy his candlesticks.

Pergamos is threatened, that, unless they speedily repent, Jesus Christ should come shortly and fight against them with the sword of his mouth.

Thyatira is threatened, that, except they repent them of their works, they should be cast into a bed

of affliction, and all their favourites should be slain with death.

Sardis is threatened, if they did not watch and awake, Christ would come suddenly upon them as a thief, and they should not know at what hour he would come.

Concerning promises, they are very great and large; for everlasting joy, and very fulness of glory, is promised to all those who fight the good fight of faith, and overcome in the spiritual battle against the flesh, the world and the devil.

Ephesus is promised, that if they fight out courageously and constantly to the end, they should eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Smyrna is promised, in like case, that they should not be hurt of the second death.

Pergamos, likewise, is promised to eat of the manna that is hid, and to have the white stone of victory given them.

Thyatira is promised to have power given them to rule over nations, and to be lightened with heavenly brightness, like the morning star.

Sardis is promised to be clothed with white array, that is, with heavenly glory; and to have their name continued in the book of life.

Philadelphia is promised to have a pillar made in the Temple of God, that is, a firm and unmoveable place of eternal glory.

Laodicea is promised to sup with Christ, and to sit with him upon his throne for evermore.

Thus we see what great promises are made to all

Churches that fight and overcome in this their spiritual battle and conflict.

Concerning the conclusion, it is one and the same to all these seven Churches. Wherein they are exhorted, that such as have ears to hear, should hear, ponder, and consider all the aforesaid praises and dispraises, admonitions, reprehensions, threats, and promises. And it is therefore said, such as have ears, because there are very few to be found that have circumcised and sanctified ears to hear and understand heavenly things. This is proper to the elect ; this is but to whom it is given.

And thus briefly and generally we see what was the present state of every one of the Churches of Asia, unto which this prophecy was to be sent : so that by them we may see in what state the universal Church militant was at that time. For as some of these seven as yet stood firm, and others had much declined, so it was with all other Churches.

Hitherto concerning the first vision, containing generally the inscription of this book ; John's salutation to the Churches ; John's new calling ; the excellency of Christ, who called him ; and the present condition of the Church. Now we are to proceed to the second vision, contained in the next eight chapters to the twelfth ; wherein is shewed, what should be the future state of the Church in all ages, even unto the end of the world.

CHAP. IV.

THE principal thing contained in this fourth chapter, is a description of the person of God, the author of this book, who is most gloriously described by that excellent glory that is in himself, and of his royal throne upon which he sitteth, and by his goodly retinue, and troops of saints and angels attending about his most glorious throne. Whereunto is added, the divers qualities both of angel and saints, both in themselves and their own natures; as also in their manner of praising and worshipping of God. This is the general sum and sense of this chapter.

But, for the better clearing and more full opening of it, I will come to the words of the text, and open them as they lie in order. *After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter,* Rev. iv. 1.

These words, *After this*, have relation to the first vision, spoken of before; as if he should say, After I had received the former vision, concerning the present state of the Church, now I had another vision concerning the future state thereof; and therefore he saith, *A door was opened in heaven*, that he might come in and see all these things which should be revealed to him. For the opening of the door in heaven, doth here signify the unlocking of heavenly things unto John, or his entrance

into them: for so the word *door* is taken, 2 Cor. iii. 12. Rev. iii. 8. After the opening of the door, he is called up with a loud voice, like a trumpet, saying, *Come up hither*: for although the door was opened, yet he durst not enter in till he was called and commanded to come in. For in these cases he doth not presume in any thing as of himself, without special warrant and direction: as the Scripture saith, *No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as Aaron was*, Heb. v. 4. The voice that calleth him is like a trumpet, that is, loud and shrill, that he might be stirred up more diligently to attend unto the contemplation of these great secrets which should be revealed unto him. This voice commandeth him to come up hither: which sheweth that John was wrapped up in the Spirit unto the heavens to see this vision. This voice promiseth *to shew him things which must be done hereafter*: that is, that he should be made acquainted with the future state of the Church, as already he was with the present state thereof. *And immediately I was ravished in the Spirit, and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat upon the throne*, Rev. iv. 2.

Upon this sudden and extraordinary calling, by so heavenly and loud a voice, John was forthwith ravished in Spirit. For as the prophet Ezekiel was, by the Spirit, in the visions of God, carried from Chaldea to Jerusalem, so this holy apostle is carried by the Spirit, in the visions of God, into heaven; and, by the same Spirit, is made fit and capable of all these heavenly visions which should be

shewed him. So that in all this we do plainly and clearly see, that John hath (as it were) a further calling and admittance from heaven, to behold and see these wonderful secrets which now are to be imparted unto him.

Behold a throne, &c. Here beginneth the description of the most high and glorious majesty of God, who is described after the manner of earthly kings and judges, sitting upon their thrones and judgment-seats. For he is King of Zion, and Judge of all the world.

And he that sat, was to look upon like unto a jasper, and a sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne like an emerald, Rev. iv. 3.

God, for his admirable glory and beauty, is here compared to two most precious stones: the one, which is the jasper, being of a perfect green colour, as philosophers write; the other, which is the sardine, being of a most bright red colour. Nothing can sufficiently resemble the glory of God, being infinite: but these things being the most precious under the sun, do, in a manner, shadow it unto us.

There was a rainbow round about the throne, which may signify that God's throne, in glory and beauty, doth far excel all other thrones of mortal princes, yea, even that of Solomon, which was of most pure ivory. Or rather it may signify, that although God in himself is most glorious and admirable, yet he keepeth promise and covenant with the sons of men. For the rainbow was a sign of his covenant, as appeareth Gen. ix. and assuredly God will be mindful of his covenant to a thousand gene-

rations. This rainbow is said to be like an emerald, which is always of a fresh green colour, signifying that God's covenant of grace and mercy towards his Church is always fresh and green, and his goodness towards his people perpetual and unchangeable.

Moreover, God is described of his glorious retinue, and heavenly company about him: for it is said, *Round about the throne were twenty-four seats, and upon the seats twenty-four elders*, Rev. iv. 4. Which signify the whole Church, both militant and triumphant, both of Jews and Gentiles; and are therefore called twenty four, because the Church of the Jews grew out of twelve patriarchs, and the Church of the Gentiles out of twelve apostles. And as the glory and pomp of mortal kings are set out by their troops, and trains of nobles and other excellent personages, so the glory of God (which in itself can receive no increase,) is to our capacity commended and set forth by his goodly companies of saints and angels. These twenty-four elders are clothed in white raiment, which signifieth their righteousness, as it is expounded, chap. xix. 8. *Not inherent, but imputative*: for they having no righteousness of their own, Christ's righteousness is imputed unto them through faith, and through faith is made theirs: *For Abraham believed, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness*. These twenty-four elders had on their heads crowns of gold, which signify their victories over the world; for all the elect overcome the world through faith, as St. John teacheth; and not the world only, but even the flesh and the devil also: and therefore the crown

and garland of victory belongeth unto them, as most valiant conquerors.

Moreover it is said, that *out of the throne proceed lightnings, and thundering, and voices* : which signify his terror and fearful power in the preaching of the law ; for the preaching of the law is, as it were a voice of lightning and thundering. The powerful preaching of the law, is the very thundering of hell, and lightning of the wrath of God upon all impenitent sinners : and, therefore, at the delivery of the law, there were lightnings and thunderings, and Mount Sinai itself did tremble and shake.

Further it is said, *There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.* These seven lamps, which are interpreted to be the seven Spirits of God, do signify the preaching of the gospel, and the manifold graces and gifts of the Spirit, which are given to the Church by the means thereof. For the gospel giveth a cheerful and comfortable light, being the ministry of the Spirit, as the apostle saith, and therefore is resembled to seven lamps. So then from the throne, that is, from the presence of God, proceeded both law and gospel, and the ministry of them both for the saving of souls. And all this maketh much for the setting forth of God's glory and majesty, being the mark here aimed at.

And before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal.

This sea of glass is the world, which is fitly compared to a sea, because it is full of storms, tempests, and waves, that are continually raised up in it.

It is full of rocks, upon which many are dashed, and consequently shipwrecked.

It is compared to a sea of glass, on account of the brittleness, changes, and uncertainty of all things in the world.

It is said to be before the throne like crystal, because the all-seeing God doth as clearly behold from his throne all the thoughts, words, and works of the sons of men, and all other particular actions of all his creatures under the sun, as we behold our face in a mirror. *For all things are naked, and as it were laid out in an anatomy unto his eyes, with whom we have to do.*

Moreover it is said, that *in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts, full of eyes before and behind*, Rev. iv. 6. These four beasts signify the angels of heaven, the invisible and elect angels, as it is expounded, Ezekiel x. 20. where the prophet, in a vision, seeth four beasts, as it were bearing up and drawing up God's chariot of triumph. And at the twentieth verse he saith expressly, that he at last understood they were the cherubims: the first and tenth chapter of Ezekiel being thoroughly looked into, will make this matter plain. The reason why the angels are called by the name of beasts is, because in the next verse they are compared to beasts, for their qualities of certain beasts. They are named four in number, being otherwise innumerable, because they are likened to four several beasts.

The angels are said to have eyes before and behind, for their greater vigilance over the Church,

and every member thereof, and because they are endued with a knowledge of things past, and things to come; and, last of all, because they see and discern almost all actions under the sun, upward and downward, backward and forward.

And the first beast was like a lion, and the second like a calf, &c. Rev. iv. 7.

Here the angels are compared to four several beasts: to a lion, for strength and courage; to a calf or an ox, for service and use; to a beast having the face of a man, for wisdom; to an eagle, for swiftness, and readiness to execute the will of God. And, moreover, because the eagles soar aloft, and fly to a very high pitch, we are given to understand, that the heavenly Spirits are much in celestial contemplation, and do receive the knowledge of hidden secrets and counsels, for they are much aloft about the throne of God, and many high and deep secrets are opened unto them.

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within, &c. Rev. iv. 8.

This maketh it very plain, that by these beasts are understood the six angels, because he ascribeth unto every one of them six wings a-piece. For the angels are described with wings, both in the first and tenth of Ezekiel, before-mentioned; and also in the sixth chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah, where each of the seraphims are said to have six wings; two to cover their faces, two to cover their feet, and two to fly withal. And they have two wings to cover their faces withal, because they are not able

to endure the inconceivable brightness and glory of God, for he dwelleth in unapproachable light. They have two wings to cover their feet withal, because mortal men are not able to look upon the brightness that is in heaven. For we read, that many have been astonished and dazzled with the glory and brightness of angels, such glorious creatures are they. They have two wings to fly withal, to note their prompt obedience and readiness to execute the commandments of God, as formerly was shewed. Moreover, the angels are said to have wings, and to fly swiftly; because God, by them, doth speedily dispatch many purposes, actions, and services here below: and for this cause the Scripture affirmeth, that *he rideth upon the cherubims, that he dwelleth between the cherubims, and that he maketh the clouds his chariots, and walketh upon the wings of the wind*. For as earthly kings are, in their processions carried in their most sumptuous coaches, drawn by the most excellent coach-horses, to dispatch great business and many weighty affairs within their dominions; so the visions in Ezekiel do shew that the immortal King is carried most swiftly in his chariot of triumph, drawn by the cherubims, as it were by beasts, to direct and over-rule all actions under the sun. Moreover, these angels are said to *be full of eyes within*, to note not only their fulness of knowledge, but also their inward sight into all heavenly things, yea, even such as are most secret and hid; for they are, of all other creatures, most inward with God. None of his children know so much of his counsel as they.

Furthermore, the angels are here said to praise God *incessantly, day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, which is, and which is to come*, Rev. iv. 8. where we may clearly see, that the angels praise and worship God in a burning zeal without weariness. For they are not as men, who, through their great corruption, are full of dulness and weariness in God's worship; but they do always serve him with indefatigable desires, and therefore are called seraphims because they burn in the zeal of God; and cherubims because their delight is to approach near unto him, and to be always about his throne; yea, even in his chamber of presence. They do double and treble this word, *holy*, and warble much upon it, because they know full well that he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; and that all his proceedings and judgments are true, when weighed in the balance of justice and equity; though to man's sense, and the judgment of reason, they are incomprehensible. For his judgments are as a great depth, which man's reason cannot sound.

Further, we see that *when these beasts*, that is, the angels, *gave glory and honour and thanks to God, &c. the twenty-four elders also fell down before him, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever*. Where we may see, that both saints and angels do jointly praise and magnify God, and him alone; *even that God that liveth for evermore; even that God which was, which is, and which is to come*: that is, the eternal and everlasting God. For the Scripture saith, *Praise him, O ye saints, and praise him, O ye*

angels that excel in strength. And the twenty-four elders cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, &c. Wherein we see, that all the elect do disclaim their own worthiness to possess such honours; acknowledging that their crowns of glory are God's free gift, and that the praise thereof belongeth only to him, and nothing to themselves. And this, in very deed, is the right manner of worshipping God, frankly to ascribe all glory to him, and all shame to ourselves; to give all to him to whom all is due, and nothing to ourselves, who have nothing: for nothing can be given or taken out of nothing.

Now then, to conclude and wind up this fourth chapter, we do clearly see the sum and drift of all this, that the door of heaven was opened unto John, and that he was let in, and called up into the chamber of presence by a very loud voice, there to take notice of the future state of the Church; and that the person which thus called him up, was the very immortal God himself, who is so gloriously described of his throne, his troops, and trains of saints and angels, as we have heard. And all this, is to commend and set forth the authority of this book, whose Author is so excellent, yea, super-excellent.

CHAP. V.

AFTER this vision, containing the glory of the Divine Majesty, was shewed unto John, that he might know from what fountain this prophecy was derived, now, in this fifth chapter, is taught and shewed by what means, and by whose mediation, the knowledge of such hidden mysteries were revealed unto the Church ; namely, by the means and mediation of Jesus Christ, in whom only the counsels and secrets of God the Father are opened and made known unto men. For he is the great Prophet and Doctor of the Church, which is come down from the bosom of his Father, and *hath made known unto us whatsoever he hath received of his Father, as he himself testifieth.* And the Church is commanded, by *a voice from heaven, to hear him, and him alone.*

This fifth chapter containeth three things generally, viz.

First, a description of the book which was on the right hand of God.

Secondly, a description of Jesus Christ, which receiveth it at the hand of his Father, and openeth it.

Thirdly, a description of the most glorious praises which are given to Christ by the angels, saints, and all the creatures in heaven and earth.

I saw on the right hand of him that sat upon the throne a book written within, and on the backside sealed with seven seals, Rev v. 1.

By the book here mentioned, is meant this present book of the Apocalypse, or Revelation, as it shall plainly appear in the next chapter, when we come to the opening of the seven seals thereof: for the things which fall out upon the opening of the several seals, do plainly declare that all is meant of the particular matters contained in this present book.

This book is said to be on the right hand of him that sitteth upon the throne, because all the secrets revealed in it come from the counsel and decree of the most high God, and are ordered by his supreme direction and providence.

It is called a written book, to shew that the things contained in it are so firmly decreed in the council of God, that none of them but shall come to pass, and be fulfilled in their season. They are such as we may write of, as we used to say; and therefore, for the certainty of them, they are here said to be written in a book.

This book is said to be written within and without, for the multitude and variety of matters contained in it. For there were both many and great things which should fall out in the world from the time that John received this prophecy unto the end of the world.

This book is sealed with seven seals, that is to say, perfectly sealed, because the things contained therein are counsels and secrets known only to God, till it pleased him to reveal them to his Church, by his Son.

The elect angels knew nothing of the things written in this book before the seals were opened.

And I saw a strong angel, proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? Rev. v. 2.

Here is a proclamation made to all creatures, that if there were any manner of persons in heaven or earth, among men or angels, that would take upon them to open and expound this book, that they should come forth and shew themselves, and be very willingly and gladly heard.

But, alas, the next verse doth shew, that *none in heaven or earth was able to open the book, or expound it; whereupon John wept very much, because no man was found worthy to open and interpret this book, Rev. v. 3, 4.*

The cause of John's weeping and lamenting, was for fear the Church should be deprived of such profitable and excellent things as he knew were contained in this book. Such was his love to the Church; such was his zeal and care for the people of God. An example worthy of all imitation, to mourn and weep for the concealing of the book of God, and to rejoice in the opening of it. But Papists and Atheists are of a contrary mind, for they rejoice in the concealing and keeping close of the Scriptures, and are much grieved with the opening and revealing thereof; because thereby their hypocrisy and villainy is detected and confounded.

Upon this one of the elders said unto John, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof, Rev. v. 5.

Here we see how John is comforted and cheered

up by one of the elders, being now very pensive and sad; and is willed to pluck up a good heart, and to be of good cheer, for he could tell him good news; to wit, of one that could open and expound this book, and all the secrets in it; and that is Jesus Christ, the great revealer of secrets, and only expounder of all difficulties and hidden mysteries, as before hath been spoken.

Jesus Christ is here said to be of the tribe of Judah, because he is lineally descended of that tribe, according to the flesh and his human nature.

He is compared unto a lion, by allusion unto Jacob's words, in his last will and testament, concerning Judah, namely, that *he should couch as a lion, and as a lioness, and none should stir him*. He is fitly compared to a lion, for his great and admirable power and strength; for he reigneth, and must reign, over all his enemies; and in the midst of all his enemies, till he hath crushed them all under his feet. He is called the *root of David*, both here, and also in the twenty-second chapter of this book, verse sixteen, because he sprung out of David, the son of Jesse, as a branch out of his root, as the prophet did foretel, that *a rod should come forth of the stock of Jesse, and a graft should grow out of his roots*. And the apostle saith, that *Christ was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh*.

Then saith John, I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb, as though he had been killed, which had seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent into all the world, Rev. v. 6.

Here John taketh a view and sight of Jesus Christ from the very midst of the throne; and of the four beasts, and the elders. Christ doth not appear about the throne, as do the saints and angels, which are but ministers and ministering spirits; but in the very midst of the throne, and the four beasts, &c. because he is God everlasting, coequal, and co-eternal with the Father; *in whom* (as the apostle saith,) *dwelleteth all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily or essentially.* And here afterward the same worship and honour is ascribed unto him, both by the saints and angels, which before is ascribed unto God the Father.

Christ is here compared to a lamb, for his innocency; for the Scripture saith, *He was a sheep, dumb before his shearers. He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. He is the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world.*

He is compared to a lion, for his great and incomparable strength in conquering hell, death, and damnation, and all infernal power. And to a lamb, because he hath fulfilled all this upon the cross, by the sacrifice of himself: for he never did more truly shew forth his lion-like power, than when he was as a lamb slain and sacrificed upon the cross.

This Lamb, Christ, is here said to have *seven horns*, which signify his manifold power, or fulness of power, or perfect power, according as this metaphor, or borrowed speech of horn is usually so taken in all the Scriptures. This Lamb, also, is said to have *seven eyes*, which are interpreted to be the seven Spirits of God; that is, the manifold graces

and gifts of the Spirit, which he giveth unto his Church.

Now then, to conclude this point, forasmuch as the number of seven in this book is a number of perfection, and always noteth perfection; therefore, by Christ's seven horns, and seven eyes, we may, and that soundly, understand his perfect power, and his perfect sight and knowledge in all things. For his seven eyes are mentioned in the third chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah, where it is said, *Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.* Meaning, that Jesus Christ, the corner stone of the Church, should be full of eyes, to look out for the good of his Church, and to give light to all others: for he is the life and light of the world.

And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne, Rev. v. 7.

Here Jesus Christ takes the book out of his Father's hand, purposing both to open it, and expound it: for he is the only expounder of the law, and the best interpreter of his Father's will.

Hereupon it is said, that *the four beasts, and twenty-four elders, fell down before the Lamb*, to testify their thankfulness and inward joy, and rejoicing that the Son of God would take upon him this office, which none other would or could perform.

Moreover, by their falling down and worshipping him, they do plainly testify that he is God over all, to be blessed for ever. For otherwise the angels of heaven, both cherubims and seraphims, would not thus fall down and worship him, ascribing unto him

both deity and divine honour. Consider then how great he is, of whom it is said, *Let all the angels of God worship him.*

Moreover, these angels and saints are said to *have every one harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.*

These harps do signify the sweet consent and harmony both of men and angels, in sounding forth the praises of the Lamb: for herein the whole Church, both militant and triumphant, do accord and tune together, *as many harpers harping upon their harps,* as it is also written in another place.

Hereby, also, they do plainly testify, that inward peace and spiritual joy which all the faithful have through Christ, which is more sweet and delightful to the soul than any music is unto the ears.

The *vials full of odours* are expounded to be the prayers of the saints, which are therefore compared to odours, because they smell sweet in the presence of God, and are by him accounted more fragrant than any nosegay or perfume whatsoever: for he taketh great pleasure in the prayers of his people; especially when they come out of golden vials, that is, sanctified hearts and consciences: for every sanctified heart is a golden heart in the sight of God; and every regenerate conscience is a jewel of price, gilt with gold, and enamelled with pearls. For this cause, the holy man David wished earnestly that his heart might be so renewed and cleansed inwardly, that his *prayer might be directed as incense in God's sight, and the lifting up of his hands as a sweet-smelling sacrifice.*

Furthermore, *these saints and angels sing a new song*. That is, they sing to the praises of the Lamb with renewed affections, and unwearied desires. Their inward joy continueth always fresh and green as the bay-tree; they never wither, or wax weary in the service of God; their song is evermore new, and therefore evermore delightful: for the more new any thing is, the more pleasant and delectable; for men are not affected with old, but altogether with new things.

Now then, Jesus Christ having taken this book into his hand to open and expound, is applauded by the general consent and voices of the whole Church: for, say they, *Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof*. Wherein they do all, with common consent, give their voices unto Christ, acknowledging him to be the only fit person, in heaven or earth, to take upon him the function of opening a book so closed, so clasped, so shut, so sealed; and they do yield a reason for their proceedings, because (say they,) *thou wast killed, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, Rev. v. 9.

Meaning hereby, that he was put to death, to pay the price of our redemption, in whom all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, are saved. The reason then is this, that he hath died, and risen again, and is now exalted far above all principalities and powers, &c. is the most fit instrument to open and interpret this book; but thou, O Christ, the Lamb of God, art such an one; therefore thou, of all others, art most

mete to take the matter upon thee, and to enter into this business.

Further, they explain their reasons thus: that *he hath made us, of slaves and servants, kings; and, of profane persons, priests unto the most high Goa.* And, last of all, that *we shall reign upon the earth.* Not meaning hereby, that we shall reign as earthly kings, or only enjoy an earthly kingdom: for, out of all doubt, the saints shall reign with Christ in the heavens for evermore. But here is mention made of reigning in the earth, because, after this life, God's children shall have the fruition and inheritance both of heaven and earth; that is to say, *that new heaven, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness:* for the heavens and the earth being purged from corruption, and, as it were, made anew, shall be the portion of the saints, and the habitation of the elect for evermore.

After all this, *John heareth the voice of innumerable angels beside the four beasts,* Rev. v. 11. That is, the cherubims and seraphims, or chief angels; that is, angels deputed to chief offices round about the throne, which all, *with a loud voice, do acknowledge the Lamb which was killed to be worthy of all honour, glory, and praise, &c.* And not only these innumerable angels, being twenty thousand times ten thousand, but also *all other creatures, both in heaven and earth:* as the sun, moon, and stars, the fishes in the sea, and the beasts in the earth, do, all in their kind, sing the same song, acknowledging *all honour and glory, praise and power, to belong unto him that sitteth upon the*

throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever, Rev v. 13. For although the creature is as yet subject to the bond of corruption, and therefore groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting when the sons of God shall be revealed, yet it standeth in assured expectation of restitution to liberty and incorruption; and therefore here all the creatures do praise the Lamb, for that restoration which they had so long and so earnestly looked for.

And the four beasts said, Amen. That is, they subscribe to those praises which the creature yieldeth to their Creator. And not only the angels subscribe and consent unto it, but the four and twenty elders also, *that fall down and worship him that liveth for ever and ever.*

So that the Lamb is praised and worshipped of all hands, both of men and angels; and all other creatures, as God everlasting, and blessed for evermore.

CHAP. VI.

IN the fourth chapter we have had the description of God the Father, which holdeth the sealed book in his right hand. In the fifth chapter we have also had the description of Jesus Christ, the opener and interpreter of this seven-sealed book. Now, in this sixth chapter, we are to understand of the matter and contents of this book, and of the strange accidents and events which followed upon the opening of every several seal.

For in this chapter six of the seals are opened by the Son of God, and the mysteries thereof disclosed unto John, that he might declare them to the Church, for the comfort and instruction thereof.

This chapter containeth six principal things, arising from the several opening of the six seals, and they are these :

The spreading of the gospel.

Great persecutions following thereupon.

Famine.

Pestilence.

Complaints of the martyrs.

Fearful revenge upon the world, for shedding the blood of God's saints.

And I saw, when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts say, Come and see, Rev. vi. 1.

Now after all these former matters, John did very attentively fix his eyes upon the Lamb, being now about to open and unclasp the first seal of the book, and all on a sudden he was admonished and stirred up by one of the cherubims, that he should draw near and come up, and take knowledge of these great and important matters, which were now to be revealed unto him. And to the end that he might be thoroughly awaked, and give strict attention to these weighty matters, it is said, that the voice of the angel which spake unto him was like the noise of thunder. So that thereby John was thoroughly roused, fitted and prepared, to receive these heavenly visions.

And I saw, and beheld a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering, that he might overcome, Rev. vi. 2.

John keeping his eye steady upon the Lamb, having now opened the first seal, doth in a vision see a white horse, &c.

By this white horse, is meant the ministry of the word of God, and the first preaching of the gospel by Christ and his apostles, and the successors in the primitive Church. The *white horse* is taken in this sense in the nineteenth chapter of this prophecy; where our Lord Jesus being upon this white horse, beateth down all his enemies before him: for who is able to resist his word, and the ministry of it.

In the first chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah, our Lord Jesus, purposing to build up his Church, (it being in a very ruinous state after the captivity,) is brought in by the prophet on horseback, both for the re-edifying of his Church, and also for the punishment of the Babylonians, his enemies, and the enemies of his people.

In the forty-fifth Psalm, the Church, the spouse, saith thus to her beloved husband, Christ: *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty one, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness, &c. Psal. xlv. 3, 4.*

Now, in all these places of the Scripture, we do plainly see, that when Christ goeth about either to preach his gospel, or build up his Church, or to be

revenged on the enemies thereof, he is brought in on horseback. And this doth strongly confirm and warrant this exposition, seeing it is not any imagined sense, or new device of man's brain, but such a sense as other places of Scripture will very fully bear out.

Moreover, if we do seriously consider, and deeply weigh the purpose and intention of the Holy Ghost in all this, it will not a little help and further this exposition. For the chief scope and drift of all is, to describe the state of the Church, from the apostles' time to the end of the world: for this prophecy serveth to *shew unto John the things that must shortly come to pass.*

Now we all know, by blessed experience, that the first state of the Church did consist in the preaching of the gospel by Christ and his apostles: and therefore this must needs be understood of that time and state of the Church. For Jesus Christ is he that sitteth upon this white horse, that is, by the ministry of his gospel he conquereth and subdueth the nations under him.

There may be three reasons alledged why this horse is said to be of a white colour: first, because the doctrine of the gospel which was preached by Christ and his apostles was pure and sincere, being without spots and blots of error and heresy. For the white colour, in the Scripture, doth signify purity, sincerity, innocence, joy, glory, and beauty.

Secondly, because the doctrine of Christ and his apostles was full of joy and comfort: as it is said of

Samaria, after Philip had preached the gospel there, that *there was great joy in that city.*

Thirdly, because the ministry of Christ and his apostles was very glorious and beautiful, as it is written: *How beautiful are the feet of them which bring the glad tidings of peace, &c.* And again, *In thy majesty ride prosperously, for the sake of truth, and righteousness.*

If any man demand the reason of Christ's sitting on horseback, and riding forth on horseback, I answer, that it doth fitly represent that marvellous swiftness wherewith the light of the gospel should be carried and spread, not only throughout a Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, but also throughout all the kingdoms of the world. For is it not a wonder, to consider how swiftly, and as it were on horseback, and also how far over the heathen nations, within a few years after Christ's ascension, the doctrine of the gospel was preached, and what multitudes embraced it! He rode forth, indeed, prosperously and swiftly upon the white horse, even the ministry of this gospel, in the cause of truth and of righteousness; and his right hand wrought fearful things, as saith the Psalmist.

Moreover, it is here said, that *Jesus Christ hath a bow in his hand.* And, in the twenty-fifth Psalm, from whence it seemeth all these phrases and speeches are borrowed, he is said to have *sharp arrows in his hand*, whereby he pierceth the hearts of his enemies.

Now his bow and arrows signify the piercing

power of the gospel, whereby the world hath been subdued unto Christ. For all the arrows of the gospel which Christ shooteth out of this bow, which is even the tongue of his ministers, do stick in the hearts of men; yea, they pierce into all the secret places of the soul. For the ministry of the gospel *is lively, and mighty in operation, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and the intents of the heart*, Heb. iv. 12.

Here is yet further mention made of a crown which was given unto Christ, and that *he went forth conquering, that he might overcome*.

This crown signifieth the victory which he getteth over the world with his bow and arrows. For the Psalmist saith, *By thy sharp arrows in the hearts of the king's enemies, the people shall fall under thee*.

We read, in the second of the Acts of the Apostles, that three thousand of the king's enemies were at once shot through with this bow and these arrows, and did fall under him. We read of many other, at other times, and in other places. For the apostle saith plainly, that *the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

Thus we see how Christ and his apostles, and all their true successors, riding upon this white horse,

which is the ministry of the gospel, have gone over all the world, conquering and overcoming.

I am not ignorant that some do expound this otherwise; but my purpose is not to meddle with other men's opinions and judgments, but to set down that which God hath given me to see, and which, in mine own conscience and persuasion, I suppose to be the truth; referring all to the judgment of the Church, and such therein as are endued with the Spirit of God. *For the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets.* And be it known unto all men, that my chief endeavours throughout this whole book, shall be to seek the sense that is, and not the sense that is not: to meddle only with truth, and let falsehood go.

And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see, Rev. vi. 3.

As before at the opening of the first seal, so now again at the opening of the second seal, John is called upon by another angel to give attention; and so afterwards at the opening of the third and fourth seal. Wherein we may observe the heaviness and drowsiness of man's nature in all heavenly things, which is always ready to sink and fall asleep, except it be awaked by many means, and stirred up by special grace.

And there went out another horse, that was red, and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword, Rev. vi. 4.

This red horse representeth the cruel persecution, and bloody wars, which followed the preaching of the gospel. For the red colour in the Scripture denoteth blood, cruelty, and wars. The rider upon this horse is the devil himself; for who but he and his instruments delight in blood, persecution, and wars? He hath power given him to take peace from the earth (for he could have no power, except it were given him); and to this purpose a great sword was given him, to murder and kill withal.

And all this is to be understood of the state of the Church under the ten great persecutions, raised up against it by the persecuting emperors, Domitian, Trajan, Nero, Antonius, Decius, Dioclesian, Maxentius, Licinius, and other cruel tyrants, even until the time of Constantine the Great. Histories report, that these cruel persecutors did, in most savage and horrible manner, torture, torment, and shed the blood of innumerable multitudes of God's people. So that as the first state of the Church, under the preaching of the gospel, was joyful and peaceable, so this second state of the Church, under such outrageous persecutions, was troublesome and tragical; and yet for all that, in the midst of all these swords, blood, and flames of persecution, the Church did still prevail, and increase. For *the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the gospel*. And the Church having been ten times sown with blood, yet springeth up, and groweth more luxuriantly. And as for the cruel and blood-sucking emperors, who could not endure the light of the gospel, bu

strove by tyranny to suppress it. The just God which taketh vengeance of all iniquity, and especially of the persecution of his children, punished them according to their deserts; for he gave them over, some to be slain in the wars, some to be tortured with horrible diseases, some to be poisoned, some to be murdered, and some to murder themselves. Thus did God shew himself to be the avenger of his people; and, as history reports, amply repaid these persecutors of his Church, making them examples of his wrath, and spectacles of his vengeance to all nations.

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand, &c. Rev. vi. 6.

By the black horse, famine and dearth is signified; for the black colour is a mournful and sad colour: for what maketh men more pensive and sad than famine and extreme hunger? for it is a thing intolerable; and therefore the Holy Ghost saith, *They be better that are killed with the sword, than they that die of famine.* He that sitteth on this horse hath a balance in his hand, which signifieth great penury and scarcity of all things, but especially of provisions; insomuch, that men must be pitted and stinted in their victuals, and their bread and drink must be delivered out by weight and measure, as it fareth in strait and sore sieges of cities, when provisions become scarce. This is it that God threateneth in Levit. xxvi. and Ezek. iv. 5.

That he would break the staff of bread, and that ten women should bake in one oven, and deliver bread by measure.

Now, to declare the grievousness of this famine, a voice cometh from the throne, and from the angels, that *a measure of wheat should be for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny.* The measure here spoken of is a chenix, which, some writers say, was so much as would serve a man for bread-corn for one day: and the Roman penny, under Domitian, was always seven-pence of our money. At that time the labouring-man did work for a penny a day, which would do little more than buy him bread-corn: how then should his wife and children do? Whereas it is said, *Wine and oil hurt thou not.* I take that it should rather be translated, *In wine and oil thou shall not do unjustly,* as the word will bear it. And the sense is, that in the state of corn and victual they shall deal conscionably and mercifully, not selling at the highest, but rather at the lowest rate, now in the times of extreme scarcity.

Now all this is to be understood of that most grievous famine which we read to have been about the year of our Lord 316, and sundry times afterward. And all this for the contempt of the gospel preached by Christ and his apostles, upon the white horse; and the murdering of God's saints by him upon the red horse, and his instruments.

So grievous and fearful a thing is the contempt of the gospel, and the persecuting of the saints. And God did most justly cause the world to smart for

it, and make them with sorrow to feel the punishment of the gospel rejected.

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed after him, &c. Rev. vi. 7, 8.

This pale horse signifieth the pestilence, and other contagious diseases, which God justly brought upon the world for the contempt of the gospel, and the murdering of Christ and his apostles. And as I noted before out of the Scriptures, that when God cometh, either in mercy or judgment, he is said to come on horseback, to note his expedition and swiftness, both in the one and the other: so, as before, Christ is upon the white horse, the Devil upon the red horse, and famine upon the black horse. So here, *death and hell are said to be upon the pale horse*: for pestilence and death maketh men look pale: but being dead, he saith hell followed. For assuredly hell doth always follow the death of the body, excepting those only whom Christ hath delivered from hell and damnation by the power of his death.

Thus then it is: the red horse with blood, the black horse with famine, the pale horse with pestilence, have power given over the fourth part of men, to murder, kill, and slay: as all histories do shew, that, for the rejecting of Christ and his Church, and his gospel, these plagues were carried, as it were on horseback over a great part of the world.

Now, as touching this famine and pestilence which fell out upon the opening of the third and fourth seals, they are to be referred unto those times especially, wherein the Huns, Goths, and Vandals, and other barbarous nations which were the wasters of the world, did destroy the Roman empire both far and near. Whereupon grew this famine, scarcity, and pestilence, and strange diseases here spoken of, about 300 years after Christ, and somewhat more.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were killed for the word of God, and for the testimony which they maintained, &c. Rev. vi. 9.

Here is discovered the state of the martyrs after this life, and the condition of the spirits of all just and perfect men. For whereas it might be demanded, what became of all those heaps and multitudes of men which were slain for the testimony of Jesus in the ten persecutions? it is here answered, that they were under the altar. *John, in a vision, seeth them under the altar.* That is, under the merciful protection of Christ in heaven, who for them, and for us all, was made both altar, priest, and sacrifice. This altar is afterwards called *the golden altar, which is before the throne of God.* So then it is clear, that the souls of the martyrs were with Christ in glory. For he saith to his disciples, *Where I am, there shall you be also.* And in another place he saith, *If I were lift up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me; that is, all believers.* Then it followeth, that the souls of these just and righteous men were in paradise, and in Abraham's bosom,

which is the very port and haven of salvation. For although the persecuting emperors, and other tyrants of the earth, had power to kill their bodies, yet had they no power over their souls, as our Lord Jesus affirmeth.

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?
Rev. vi. 10.

Here we see plainly, that the souls of the martyrs do very loudly cry for vengeance upon those cruel tyrants which shed their blood. Moreover, they cry for it speedily, and seem to be impatient of delay. But it is to be observed, that they do not this from any hatred or private desire of revenge, in respect of any wrong or cruelty shewed to them; but from a burning zeal and attachment to the kingdom and glory of Christ: and whatsoever desire they have, it is wholly to that end. Wherefore they are here, under a figure, brought in crying for vengeance, rather to express that the judgment of God is preparing for the cruel persecutors, than to shew what mind they bear towards them. For it is, indeed, their cause that cries for vengeance. And, as Abel's blood, so their blood cries aloud in the ears of the Lord of hosts for revenge.

Moreover, we may not imagine, or gather out of this loud crying of the martyrs in heaven, that they have any disturbance, impatience, disquiet, or any discontent there. But this they do in a fervent desire of that fulness of glory which they assuredly hope for, and expect in the consummation of all things.

when both their souls and bodies shall be joined together.

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, That they should rest for a little season, until their fellow-servants and their brethren which should be killed, as they were, were fulfilled, Rev. vi. 11.

These white robes do signify that honour, glory, and dignity whereunto not only the martyrs, but also all other faithful believers, are advanced in the chambers of peace: for so white robes are to be understood in sundry other places of this book. And this does plainly prove, that the martyrs were now in glory with Christ.

Now, as concerning the answer to their complaint and lamentations, it was this, That they should be content, and have patience for a little season, (for the time remaining, to the end of the world, was but as a day with God, and as a moment in comparison of eternity): and the reason of the delay is given, which is this, that there were numbers of others their brethren in the world, which should be martyred and slain for the truth, as well as they, under the great Antichrist of Rome, and the cruel Turk, at and upon the opening of the seventh seal. And therefore, in consideration that the most wise God had decreed and determined with himself, in most secret and hid counsel, to bring multitudes of others to glory by the same way and means that themselves were brought; that therefore, in the meantime, being so short a time, they should rest satisfied and contented. And here, by the way, we see what

stayeth the coming of Christ unto judgment ; nameiy this, that the number of the martyrs and saints, and all such as he hath chosen unto life, are not yet accomplished.

And behold when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo there was a great earthquake, and the sun became as black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig-tree casteth her green figs, when it is shaken of a mighty wind. And heaven departed, as a scroll when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their place, Rev. vi. 12, 13, 14.

Upon the opening of the sixth seal, very doleful and fearful things do follow ; as earthquakes, the darkening of the sun, the obscurity of the moon, the falling of the stars, the rolling together of the heavens, the removing of mountains and islands out of their places, the howlings and horrors of kings, captains, and other potentates of the earth, which are all things very terrible and fearful to behold : and all these do represent and figure out unto us the most dreadful tokens of God's high displeasure, and most heavy indignation against the wicked world.

Very grievous things fell out upon the opening of the second, third, and fourth seals, but they are far more grievous which follow, upon the opening of this sixth seal ; for this sixth seal containeth an aggravation and increase of all the former judgments. For now, after the cry of the martyrs for vengeance, God, the avenger of the blood of the righteous, doth shew himself from heaven, and

declares his wrath in a more dreadful manner than before, even to the great astonishment of all the creatures in heaven and earth. So horrible a thing is the shedding of the blood of the Christians. For now we see plainly, that God heareth the cries of his martyrs, and cometh as a giant, or an armed man, to take vengeance on all their enemies. For *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints* : and he is much moved with the cry of their blood, as here we see. And therefore now threateneth to hold a general assize, wherein he will make inquisition after blood, and arraign and condemn all such as are found guilty thereof: according as the persecuting emperors, and many others, did find and feel by woful experience. For if God be angry but a little, who may endure it ?

Now although histories do report, that in those days, which was about 300 years after Christ, there were many great and dreadful earthquakes in divers nations and cities of the world; yet it is apparent, that the earthquake here spoken of cannot be taken literally, nor any of the rest here mentioned. For there never was any time, neither is it mentioned in any chronicle, that ever the sun was as black as sackcloth of hair, or the moon turned into blood, or the stars fell from heaven, or the heavens rolled together like a scroll, or that mountains and islands were moved out of their places. Therefore, of necessity, all this must be understood metaphorically; that is, that God did, in so strange and dreadful a manner, manifest his wrath from heaven, by tumults, commotions, seditions, and alterations

of kingdoms; as if these things of the sun, moon, and stars, had been visibly represented to the eye. An earthquake, in this book, and other books also of the Scripture, doth, by a borrowed speech, signify commotions of commonwealths, troubles, tumults, uproars, and great alterations of states and kingdoms. The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, and rolling together of the heavens, do, by a metaphor in the Scripture, signify the wrath of God; which they being not able to endure, are said here to blush at, to cover themselves, to hide themselves, to be ashamed of themselves, to remove out of their places, no more to do their office, &c. For as birds do hide themselves, and thrust their heads into bushes, when the eagle cometh abroad; and as all beasts of the forest do tremble and couch in their dens when the lion roareth; and as that subject doth hide himself, and dare not shew his head, with whom the king is displeased; so here it is said, that the whole earth doth tremble, and all the celestial creatures are amazed and confounded with beholding the angry face of God against the world, insomuch, that they do, as it were, draw a canopy over them, hide themselves under a cloud, and cease to do their offices.

The darkening of the sun and moon is taken in this sense in the second of Joel, and also in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. For there God, promising and foretelling that in the last days he would abundantly pour forth his Spirit upon all flesh (which is to be understood of the plentiful preaching of the gospel in the apostles

time, and the abundance of grace that was given with the same,) addeth, that, for the contempt of so great grace and mercy, he would shew wonders in heaven above, and tokens in the earth beneath. Blood and fire, and the vapour of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. The meaning of the prophet is, as Peter also doth expound it, that God from heaven will shew apparent signs of his wrath against the world, that men should be no less amazed than if the whole order of nature were inverted. And this was performed, when the Jews, for the contempt of Christ and his gospel, were most miserably destroyed by the Romans.

Even so here, under the opening of the sixth seal God doth threaten, that for the murdering of his Son, Jesus Christ, and his apostles and innumerable disciples, he would bring strange judgments and extraordinary calamities upon the world, according as all histories doth shew, that those times were full of bloodshed, commotions, famine, pestilence, and miseries of all sorts. I am not ignorant, that the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars from heaven, are sometimes in this book put for the obscurity and corruption of pure doctrine, and the falling away of the pastors of the Church from their sincerity and zeal. But in this place the circumstances will not bear that sense; first, because here the darkening of the sun and moon, &c is joined here with an earthquake, the

rolling together of the heavens, and the moving of mountains and islands out of their places; which argueth a most horrible confusion of all things. Secondly, because afterward, in the eighth chapter, he doth particularly speak of the corrupting of pure doctrine, and the falling away of the ministers, referring it to that chapter as its proper place. Thirdly, because the kings and captains of the earth here immediately mentioned, would never have been cast into any such perplexities and horrors upon any corruption of doctrine and the ministry, as we here read of. For men are but seldom touched or moved with that, or such like things. Last of all, because the scope and drift of the Holy Ghost, under opening of this sixth seal, is to describe corporal, not spiritual; visible, not invisible judgments: for he doth orderly and especially handle them in the next chapter.

Now, whereas it is said, in the three last verses, that *the kings of the earth, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman hid themselves in dens, and amongst the rocks of the mountains, and said to the rocks and mountains, Fall on us, &c.* The sense and meaning of all is this, that these visible judgments should be so horrible and extraordinary, that all sorts of men then living upon the face of the earth should even wish themselves buried quick, or that they might run into any place of obscurity to hide themselves from the wrath of the Lamb. For being both outwardly terrified with these sensible judgments, and

inwardly grieved and tormented with the fury of their own consciences, they were utterly unable to endure it.

CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter doth wholly appertain unto the opening of the sixth seal. It sheweth generally, how God, in the midst of all the calamities which happened under the opening of the sixth seal, yet did preserve his own Church, and mercifully provide for his own people.

This seventh chapter may be fitly divided into three parts.

First, it sheweth, that as God did most terribly punish the world with visible and sensible judgments, as we have heard before; so now he would set upon them with invisible and spiritual plagues which are of all others most grievous and intolerable.

Secondly, it sheweth the state and condition of the Church militant here on earth, as before was shewed under the opening of the fifth seal, the state of the Church triumphant in the heavens; namely, that it is sealed, and set in safety from all dangers.

Thirdly, it sheweth the blessed and happy estate of all God's elect; and their fervent praises and zealous worship of God, who thus mercifully did provide for their security in the midst of greatest perils and extremities.

And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, neither on the sea, neither on any green tree, Rev. vii. 1.

These four angels are angels of darkness, or four devils; which is proved by this reason, that they hold the four winds from blowing on the earth: that is, stop the course of the gospel, which is a spiritual plague.

They are said to stand upon the four corners of the earth, because power was given them to plague, not some one or two countries, but the universal world, both east, west, north, and south.

The blowing of the winds doth very properly represent the preaching of the gospel, and that heavenly inspiration and breathing of the Holy Ghost which goeth with it. Wind is so taken, John iii. where our Lord Jesus saith, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, &c.* So is every man that is born of the Spirit. And again, in the fourth of the Cantic. in these words: *Arise, O north, and come, O south, and blow on my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.* Where it plainly appeareth, that the Church craveth the inspiration of the Spirit, that her fruits may abound: for what can be meant by these winds which she wisheth to blow upon her garden, but the breathing of God's spirit and word? It followeth then, that if the blowing of the winds, in the Scriptures, doth signify the breathing of God's grace and holy spirit, that the stopping of the winds, by reason of the contraries, doth here

signify the stopping of the same, and the deprivation of all heavenly blessings. So that it is clear, that a spiritual plague is here represented; which also is the more apparent, because here is such a special caution and care for the Church's safety, that it might not be infected with this spiritual contagion. Now all this doth fore-prophecy, not only the stopping of the course of the gospel, but even the utter taking of it away from the world, for their great contempt thereof, and the horrible murdering and massacring of all the true professors of it: according as it came to pass afterward in the prevailing, first, of heresies, and afterward of the Popish and Mahometan religion, as in the two next chapters following shall plainly appear.

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, which had the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom power was given to hurt the earth and sea; saying, Hurt ye not the earth, neither the sea, neither the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads, Rev. vii. 2, 3.

This angel is Jesus Christ, who by the prophet is called *the angel of the covenant*. That angels do represent and sustain the person of Christ, their head, is so common and usual a thing in the Scriptures, that I shall not need to dwell upon it.

That this angel is Christ, doth plainly appear by the things here attributed unto him, which can agree to no other.

First, in that he hath the seal of the living God

(which is the spirit of adoption,) to set upon all the elect, for he is the only keeper of this great seal, and this privy seal: he only hath authority to set it upon whom he will.

Secondly, because he is said *to come up from the east*: that he is the only Sun of righteousness, which rises upon his Church every morning, and with his bright beams dispelleth all darkness from it. According to that of Zacharias, in his prophetical song, *Through the tender mercy of our God, the Day-spring from on high hath visited us.*

Thirdly, because he holdeth a sovereignty and command over the devils; for he chargeth them here to stay their hands from doing any hurt, till he had provided for his elect.

Whereas it is said, that *power was given to these devils to hurt the earth, the sea, and the trees*: that is, the number of reprobates; we may note, that the devils have no absolute power, but only by permission: as appeareth in this, that they could neither touch Job, nor enter into the herd of swine, without licence.

Whereas it is said, *Till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads*; it doth plainly shew that the punishments of the wicked are deferred till provision be made for the elect. *The flood came not upon the old world till Noah and his family were received into the ark. The angels destroyed not Sodom till Lot was set in safety. The plaguing angel spared the first-born of Egypt till the posts of the Israelites houses were sprinkled with the paschal lamb. The six*

angels sent to destroy Jerusalem are charged to stay the execution till the servants of God were marked in their foreheads, Ezek. ix. 6.

All these examples manifestly declare what tender care the Lord, in all ages, hath had of his own people, that they might be delivered and placed in safety in the midst of all extremities. Even so here we see, that God is very careful that his own children might not be infected with those abominable heresies which now already, upon the stopping of the course of the gospel, began to be propagated, and afterward did spring and grow up in the Church, both thick and threefold.

And I heard the number of them that were sealed, and there were sealed an hundred forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel; of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand, &c. Rev. vi. 4, 5.

Now John heareth the number of them that were sealed; and he reckoneth up the whole Church militant, consisting both of the Jews and Gentiles. He saith, *That of the Church of the Jews there were sealed an hundred forty and four thousand:* wherein he putteth a certain number for an uncertain, and a definite number therewithal also for an indefinite; for his meaning is not that there were just so many, and neither more nor less sealed; but this number doth arise of twelve times twelve, in that he saith, *Of every tribe twelve thousand:* for twelve times twelve thousand make an hundred forty and four thousand. Neither are we to think, that of every tribe there were an equal number sealed, not

more nor less of one tribe than another; but this number of twelve is used as the perfect and full number, inasmuch as the Church of the Jews was founded upon the twelve patriarchs, unto which our Saviour had respect; when, for the purpose of gathering the dispersed and lost sheep of Israel, he chose twelve apostles.

Now here we are to observe, that notwithstanding the horrible persecutions and calamities which fell out upon the opening of four of the seals, yet God had his Church even among the Jews; which, in the judgment of reason, a man would have thought, long ere now, had been utterly extinct and abolished. But the apostle saith, *God hath not cast off his people which he had chosen*: that is, utterly cast them off.

It is therefore a most sure and certain position in divinity, that God hath always his Church; that is, in all ages, in all times, in all places, in all countries; even in the midst of all troubles, and flames of persecution, yet God hath his hid and invisible Church, even upon the face of the earth. As it was in the days of Elias. As it was in Christ's time, when *the Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep scattered*. And as it was in the days of the great Antichrist, as afterwards we shall see.

Moreover, it is to be observed, that, in the enumeration of the twelve tribes, the tribe of Dan is left out, and the tribe of Levi taken in. The cause of the omission and passing over of the tribe of Dan, was their continuance in idolatry from the time of the Judges (at which time they first fell into it,) even

unto the captivity. This tribe is also omitted in the catalogue of the tribes mentioned in 1 Chron. chap. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. vii. Then the reason of this omission, is, first, their unworthiness; and, secondly, that there might be a place and room for the tribe of Levi to be taken in; which in this catalogue, for singular reason, and a special mystery, might not be omitted. For although the tribe of Levi had no portion or inheritance among the other tribes in the earthly Canaan, yet now, the priesthood being transferred unto Christ, the Holy Ghost doth expressly affirm that the tribe of Levi, as well as others, hath their part and portion in the heavenly inheritance, and the celestial Canaan.

After these things I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with long white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, &c. Rev. vi. 9, 10.

This is to be understood of the Church of the Gentiles, and they are said to be *an innumerable multitude of all countries and nations*. For although the Church of God, in respect of the remainder of the world, is as yet but small, and as an handful upon the face of the earth; yet in itself, simply considered, it is very great and large: for even out of Adam's sinful race God hath chosen many thousands to life. And here still we are to observe the great goodness and mercy of God, that notwithstanding former persecutions, and the great blindness which

afterward did invade the Church in the prevailing errors and heresies, yet John heareth and seeth such an huge number sealed up to salvation, through Christ, both of the Jews and Gentiles.

The Church of the Gentiles, exceeding in number the Church of the Jews, are here said *to have long white robes*, in token of their purity and innocence; *and palms in their hands*, in sign of their victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. For palms, in ancient times, were ensigns and badges of victory.

After this is set down, how the whole Church of the Gentiles do praise and worship God freely, acknowledging salvation to be only of him, through Christ. And all the angels of heaven do applaud, subscribe, and say Amen to the same, as we have heard before in the fourth chapter.

The four beasts are here mentioned again, whereby is meant the angels, both because they are said to have wings, chap. iv. which agreeth to none but angels, Isaiah vi. and also because they are expressly named and interpreted to be the cherubims, Ezek. x.

If any man muse why the angels should be called beasts, let him be satisfied with these four reasons. First, because they are compared to beasts before, as the lion, calf, &c. Secondly, because Ezekiel called them so, inasmuch as they draw God's chariot of triumph. Thirdly, because the prophet Zachariah compareth them to red, speckled, and white horses. Fourthly, because the same prophet calleth them God's chariots and horses, which came out of two mountains of brass; that is, they went forth at his decree, (which standeth as fast and unremoveable

as a mountain of brass,) to comfort and deliver his Church out of the captivity of Babylon, and also to succour and help the remnant which were left behind in Judea. Now, in the prophets, these chariots and chariot-horses are said to carry the Almighty most swiftly throughout all the world. And therefore, in Zachariah, it is said of the angels, *These are they which go through the whole world.* In Ezekiel it is said, *that the beasts ran, and returned like lightning.* And again, *that they sparkled like the appearance of bright brass; and the wheels of God's chariots were moved with inconceivable swiftness, even as fast as the angels did fly.*

Let these reasons, and Scriptures, then satisfy us touching this, that the angels are called beasts. After all this, one of the twenty-four elders asked John what they were, and from whence they came, which were thus arrayed in long white robes. Which question is asked of the elder, not as being ignorant thereof, but to stir up John, being ignorant, to enquire of the matter, that he might instruct him therein. And therefore, when John confessed his ignorance, desiring to be instructed therein, the elder telleth him the whole matter; namely, *that they were such as were come out of great tribulation: for none can enter into life but through many afflictions,* as the apostle saith.

After this again, the militant and visible Church is described and set forth, not according to their present state, but according to that which is to come: for they are here spoken of, as if they were already in the possession of heaven, and that for

the infallible certainty and assurance thereof. Therefore the apostle saith, that *even already they do sit together in heavenly places*. And here they are said to be in the presence of the throne of God, &c. to hunger and thirst no more, &c. to have all tears wiped from their eyes, and to be led by the Lamb unto the fountains of living waters. All which doth very plainly and clearly express that infinite glory and endless felicity which is prepared for all the true and faithful worshippers of God. Many good lessons and observations might be gathered out of all this; but I purposely omit them, because in this work I do chiefly, and almost altogether aim at interpretation, and therein, also, studying brevity, soundness, and plainness.

CHAP. VIII.

WE have heard, in the seventh chapter, how the devils and their instruments, the Roman emperors, did stop the course of the gospel. Now, in this chapter, we are to hear the woful effects of the stopping thereof, which was the springing up and prevailing of manifold errors and heresies in the world. So that the principal scope and purport of this chapter, is to shew that God, for the contempt of his gospel, and the great indignities offered to the true professors thereof, did give up the world to blindness, to error, to superstition, and to heresy: and, as the apostle saith, *Because they received not the*

love of the truth, therefore God sent them strong delusions, that they should believe in lies, Thess. ii. 10, 11. For, as before we have heard, how the world was most severely punished with external plagues and judgments; so here we are to understand, how the same was punished with judgments spiritual and internal, as formerly hath been said upon the stopping of the four winds. For although that spiritual plague was very great, yet these spiritual plagues which follow, upon the opening of the seventh seal, are far greater. For now we are to hear and understand, not only of the errors and heresies whereby a way and passage was made by degrees, as it were by gradual steps, for Antichrist to climb up into his cursed chair, and to take possession thereof; but also we are to be informed of his very tyranny and kingdom itself; and also of the kingdom of the Turk, and the last judgment. For the things contained under the opening of the seventh seal do reach unto the end of the world. For the book sealed with seven seals containeth all the whole matters which were to be revealed.

This chapter contains four principal things, as it were the four parts thereof.

First, the reverend attention, silence, and moderation, which was in the Church at and before the coming forth of this most dreadful vengeance.

Secondly, before the execution of these most execrable plagues the Church is remembered, and set in safety with all her children, by her great Mediator, Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, the execution of this vengeance, which

cometh forth at the blowing of the seven trumpets by seven angels.

Fourthly, the vengeance itself contained in the prevailing of error and heresy; the falling away of the pastors of the Church: and the universal darkness that followed thereupon.

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven above half an hour, Rev. viii. 1.

By silence here, is meant the great attention of the Church; which is here properly represented under the figure of heaven, being, as our Lord saith, the kingdom of heaven, because great things were now at hand. For now, upon the opening of the seventh seal, far greater matters are threatened than any before; and therefore the Church doth listen to them in deep silence, and, as it were, with horror and trembling: for now there appear such dreadful judgments of God to be executed upon the earth, that all the heavenly company are astonished and amazed to behold it, and do, as it were, quake and tremble to think upon it. For as when heavy news cometh down from the prince to be proclaimed in open markets, all good subjects do listen and give ear with silence and trembling: so it fareth in this case. By half an hour, he meaneth that short period wherein the minds of the godly were prepared, fitted, and disposed wisely to consider of these matters, and to make good use of them.

And I saw seven angels, which stood before God: and to them were given seven trumpets, Rev. viii. 2.

These seven trumpets signify that God would proceed against the world in dreadful hostility, and

come against it as an open enemy unto battle, proclaiming open war against it, as it were with sound of trumpet and drum, setting up the flag of defiance against it. And hereupon groweth this silence and trembling in the Church, which only was moved with the signs of God's wrath, when all others sit still in security, as the prophet Zachariah saith in like case.

To stand in this place, signifieth to administer, as it is said of the priests and Levites, that they stand before God, and before the altar, that is, minister. So here the angels do stand before God, as ready to administer and execute these judgments. For they are ministering spirits, and here they do sound the alarm at the commandment of God. These angels are propounded as seven in number, because it pleased not God at once to pour down his wrath upon the rebellious world, but at divers times, and by piece-meal. Whether these were good or bad angels, it is not material to dispute, seeing God executeth his judgments both by the one and the other.

Moreover, it is especially to be observed, that the blowing of these seven trumpets do all belong to the opening of the seventh seal, and are, as it were, the seven parts thereof; for the things which fall out upon the blowing of these trumpets do reach even unto the last judgment, as the angel sweareth, chap. x. 6, 7.

Then another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers

of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

We heard before, that when the course of the gospel was stopped by the devil and his instruments, yet God was very careful for the safety and sealing up of his own servants; so likewise we are now to hear of the like care and providence: for now, that errors and heresies were to be sown in the world, whereby many were corrupted; and that he himself from heaven doth proclaim open enmity against the despisers of his gospel, by giving them up to blindness and error: he doth double his care and providence to all his faithful worshippers. For here we plainly see the Church hath a Mediator; and that he which keepeth Israel, neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. And therefore, when the wrath of God doth most of all break forth upon the world, for the contempt of his grace, yet the Church is remembered, and set in safety, with all her children: for her prayers come up before God, and are accepted through the Mediator. And this is the sense and drift of this third verse.

By this angel, is meant Jesus Christ, the angel of the covenant, as we have heard before, who is not an angel by nature, but by office.

It is manifest, that in the old law there was a golden altar, and a golden censer, on which the priest did burn sweet incense before the Lord; which did figure the mediation of Christ, in whom the prayers of the saints are accepted.

Now here the Holy Ghost alludeth to that sacri-

ficing priesthood of the Old Testament, where incense was offered at the altar, which now is the sweet savour of the death of Christ, through whom both we and all our sacrifices are seasoned and sweetened.

Who, therefore, is this angel, but Christ? What are the sweet odours with the which the prayers of all saints come before God, but the mediation of the Lord Jesus? What is meant by the smoke of the odours, which, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand? Surely the incense of Christ's mediation, wherewith our prayers are perfumed, that they may ascend as sweet-smelling sacrifices into the presence of God. For as water cast into a fire raiseth smoke, so the tears of the faithful besprinkled in their prayers, make them as sweet incense, acceptable to God through Christ. The sum of all is this, that in the midst of all these heresies, and those troubles which should be raised up by the Pope and his clergy, the Turk and his armies, as in the next chapter we shall see, the elect have their prayers heard, for their preservation, by the merits of Christ.

And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, Rev. viii. 5.

Here we see how Jesus Christ taketh the censer, and filleth it with the fire of the altar: that is, the graces and gifts of the Spirit; for so the fire of the altar is taken in Isaiah.

In this sense, it is said that our Lord Jesus should

baptize with fire and the Holy Ghost; that is, the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. In this sense also the Holy Ghost did rest upon the disciples, in the likeness of cloven tongues like fire, whereupon they were all filled with gifts and graces.

The Holy Ghost is compared to fire, because he burns out our dross, purges the hearts of the faithful, and setteth them on fire with the burning love and zeal of God's glory. So then it followeth, that as before there was provision had for the safety of the Church by her Mediator, so here many heavenly gifts and graces are bestowed upon her. For Christ casts this fire of the altar upon the earth; that is, upon his followers, dwelling on the earth.

Hereupon it is said, that there were voices, and thunderings, &c.; that is, all manner of broils, tumults, uproars, slaughters, and divisions. For after the gospel was sounded forth in the Church, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the devil is disturbed, and the world molested. And hence spring all these broils and tumults, thundering, and lightning: and we must look for such stirs after the preaching of the gospel, whilst there is a world and a devil.

Therefore our Lord Jesus saith, *He came not to bring peace into the earth, but fire and sword, and to set a man at variance against his father, and likewise the daughter against her mother, &c.* For divisions and civil dissensions always follow the preaching of the gospel; through the frowardness and corruption of man's nature, which will not yield unto it, but most stubbornly rebelleth against it.

Then the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound, Rev. viii. 6.

Now beginneth this open war to be proclaimed against the world for their great ungodliness and rebellion against the truth.

So the first angel blew the trumpet, and there was hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt, Rev. viii. 7.

It were absurd to imagine that any thing in this verse is to be taken literally ; seeing, in the literal sense, there was never any such matter. Therefore, of necessity, it must be expounded mystically and allegorically. Therefore, by this hail and fire mingled with blood, is meant errors and heresies. For, as hail doth beat down corn, and destroy the fruits of the earth ; fire doth consume, and blood doth corrupt and putrify ; so false doctrine and heresy doth annoy, consume, and corrupt the souls of men. For it is said, that *these things, mingled together, were cast upon the earth* ; that is, the inhabitants of the earth, and the third part of the trees ; that is, the numbers of men, or a very great part of the world, was corrupted. For trees, in the Scripture, signify men : and *all green grass was burnt* ; that is, the fresh fruits of grace did wither apace, and dry up ; for as error and heresy did prevail, so truth and godliness did decay.

All this hath relation to the heresies of Sabellius, Manicheus, Marcion, Fotinus, Paulus, Samosatenus, Nestorius, Novatus, Diodorus, Apolinaris, Pelagius, and many others, which about this time, being four

hundred years after Christ, began to spring up, and grow apace.

And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood, &c. Rev. viii. 8.

Upon the sounding of the second trumpet by the second angel, here appeareth a great mountain burning with fire; whereby is meant some great and notable heresies, as that of Arius, which troubled and wasted the Church for the space of three hundred years, being greatly favoured of sundry emperors, and other great potentates in the earth, by means whereof it continued and overspread so long. Also this may be referred to other great and notable arch-heresies, as that of Donatus, Macedonius, Eutyches, Valentius, and such like; which are all here compared to a mountain, for their hugeness and greatness; and to a burning mountain, because the Church was almost burnt thereby. For this word mountain, is sometimes in the Scripture put for any let or hinderance to true religion, as is error and heresy, Zach. iv. 7. Luke iii. 5.

Therefore it is said, that *it was cast into the sea*, that is, these great heresies are cast upon the world in God's wrath and heavy indignation; for the sea is put for the world, chap. iv. 6. chap. xiii. 1. for, as the sea is full of rocks, storms, and tempests, so it well denoteth this present evil world.

Moreover it is said, that the third part of the sea became blood; that is, all Europe, or some great part of the world, was corrupted and infected with

these great heresies. And he saith in the next verse, that *the third part of the ships were destroyed*; that is, a great number of mariners and shipmasters, as well as landmen, were infected with these heresies, and died of them, and in them.

Then the third angel blew the trumpet, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters, Rev. viii. 10.

Stars, in this book, are put for ministers of the gospel, as we have heard out of the first chapter, where the reasons are given for their being called so. Then followeth, that the falling of this star from heaven, doth most fitly signify and set forth the declining and fall of the pastors of the Church, and their corrupting of the true doctrine: which is meant by the fresh rivers and pure fountains into which it fell. This star hath its name of the effect: for it is called wormwood; because, through the fall of it, the sweet waters into which it fell were turned into bitterness, and men died of them; that is, the doctrine was corrupted, which turned to the destruction of many.

And the fourth angel blew the trumpet, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, &c. Rev. viii. 12.

This darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, signifies that great darkness which was brought upon the Church by such teachers as did daily more and more degenerate.

Three things are generally to be observed in the blowing of these first four trumpets, viz.

First, that the plagues here mentioned, are specially to be understood of spiritual plagues.

Secondly, that there is a progression, from lesser to greater, in these plagues.

Thirdly, that in every one there is mentioned but a third part destroyed; which plainly sheweth, that although the Church was greatly annoyed and distressed with these errors and heresies, yet it was not destroyed and brought to utter desolation; for the full setting up of Antichrist was not yet come. All these errors and heresies which were cast upon the world, and did spring and grow apace in all places, did, as it were, make way for Antichrist, and help and assist him up into his cursed chair.

By the histories of the Church, and course of times, it seemeth that the Holy Ghost pointeth at those manifold heresies which sprung up in the Church after the first three hundred years, especially after the death of Constantine the Great, who procured peace to the Church, destroyed idolatry, and set up true religion in his days.

Now, after his reign, and the reign of Theodosius, that good emperor, Constantius, Julianus, Arcadeus, Honorius, and many other wicked emperors, succeeded; by whose means all things in the Church grew worse and worse: yet this one thing is to be observed, that all truth of religion was not utterly extinct and put out till the full loosing of Satan; which was a thousand years after Christ, as we shall

plainly see when we come to the twentieth chapter, concerning the binding of satan for a thousand years. For sure it is, that the main principles and grounds of religion continued in the Church till this full loosing of satan; which was about the time of Silvester the Second, that monster, as afterward we shall hear.

But now, in the meantime, we see what heresies sprung up, what corruption grew and increased more and more, what darkness began to overspread a third part of the world; and these things grew worse and worse, until, by these means, the great Antichrist came to be possessed of his cursed seat and see of Rome, which was about some six hundred years after Christ.

And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound, Rev. viii. 13.

Because the judgments which were to be executed hereafter, upon the blowing of the next three trumpets, were far more dreadful and horrible than any were before; therefore here is a special angel or messenger of God, sent on purpose to give warning thereof, and to proclaim openly in the Church three terrible woes which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth; that is, all earthly-minded men, as worldlings, Papists, and Atheists, at such times as the next three angels should blow the trumpets.

The first of these great woes, is to be understood of the Papacy. The second, of Mahomedanism. The third, of the last judgment. As if he should have said, Woe unto the world, because of Popery! Woe unto the world, because of Mahomedanism! Woe unto the world, because of the last judgment! Woe unto the world for Popery, because thereby men should be punished in their souls. Woe unto the world for Mahomedanism, because thereby thousands should be murdered in their bodies by the Turkish armies. Woe unto the world because of the last judgment, for thereby all worldlings should be tormented both in body and soul, in hell-fire for evermore.

Since these three last plagues which were to come upon the world are more fearful and terrible than any of the other four, no wonder that a special messenger is sent on purpose to give intelligence thereof, that every man might look to himself, seeing such great dangers were at hand. And for this cause also, it is said before, that there was silence in the Church for the space of half an hour.

CHAP. IX.

THE principal scope and drift of this chapter, is to paint out both the Pope and his clergy, and also the kingdom of the Turk and his cruel armies. For having already set down how a way and passage was made for the Pope to climb up into his chair,

by the spreading of heresies, the falling away of the pastors of the Church, and the great prevalence of darkness and ignorance ; now he comes to describe the Pope in his full height and greatest exaltation, being now univereal bishop, and in full possession of his seat and see of Rome, which was about some six hundred years after Christ, as formerly hath been shewed. At which time pope Boniface obtained of the emperor Phocas, that murderer, who slew his master Mauritius, the emperor, that the bishop of Rome should be called the universal bishop, and the Church of Rome the head of all Churches.

This ninth chapter may very fitly be divided into two parts. The first is a lively description of the Pope himself, his kingdom, and his clergy. The second is a description of the kingdom of the Turk, and his most savage armies. So that this chapter is a full opening of the first two great woes mentioned before, concerning the Papacy and Mahomedanism.

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth ; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit, Rev. ix. 1.

Warning was given before, that when this fifth angel should sound the trumpet, a most dreadful woe should come upon the world, surpassing all that went before, which is the setting up of Antichrist in his pride ; that man of sin, that son of perdition.

The Pope is here compared to a star, as well as other godly ministers, in this book, because the

bishops of Rome, at the first, were godly and excellent men; for among the first thirty of them, there were some martyrs. But it is here said, that now this star was fallen from heaven unto the earth; that is, the bishops of Rome were greatly degenerated and fallen away from heavenly things to earthly: for they declined from time to time, and grew worse and worse, so far as to become the great Antichrist.

But some men may say, Why may not this star falling from heaven upon the earth, be understood of other pastors falling from the truth as well as the Pope, as it is taken in the former chapter, and in the twelfth chapter and the fourth verse? I answer, that the circumstances will not here bear it. Therefore, to persuade every honest man's conscience that this must needs be understood of the Pope in his pride, let us give ear to these three reasons following :

First, we are to consider, that the main object of the Holy Ghost in the opening of the seven seals, and sounding of the seven trumpets, is to lay out the state of the Church in all ages, till the coming of Christ. Further, we are diligently to observe, that the things contained under the opening of the seventh seal (whereof the sounding of the seven trumpets are, as it were, parts, and do all belong unto it,) do extend even unto the end of the world so that there is no strange accident, or any woful condition of the Church in any age, but it is set forth under the opening of the seals, and sounding of these trumpets. But the papacy was a state of

the Church, and that most woful and lamentable; therefore it is described under the opening of the seals, and sounding of these trumpets. But it is not described under the opening of any other seal, or sounding of any other trumpet; therefore, of necessity, it must be referred to this seventh seal, and the fifth trumpet: and this is my first reason.

If any man object that the Pope and his kingdom are most lively described in the chapters from the twelfth to the last; I answer, that all those chapters belong to a new vision, wherein some things, propounded under the opening of the seven seals, are more fully opened and expounded. But this I say, that in this second vision the whole state of the Church, in every age, is laid open, even until the last judgment; and therefore, when the seventh angel here doth sound the seventh trumpet, immediately followeth the last judgment, as appeareth in chap. x. 6. and chap. xi. 15, 16.

My second reason is drawn from the course and consideration of times: for the great prevailing of errors and heresies, mentioned before, which made way for Antichrist, was from the first three hundred years until the six hundred years, and so forward. But now, immediately upon this great increase of error and darkness, comes the description of a special star fallen from heaven at this time, which was about six hundred years after Christ, and therefore it must needs be understood of the Pope. And this is my second reason.

My third and last reason is drawn from the description of the Pope and his clergy, in the first
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eleven verses of this chapter. For he is so truly described and painted out in particulars, that all men that know him, or ever heard of him, must needs say it is he. For this description here set down by the Holy Ghost, can agree to none other.

The Papists themselves do confess, that this star here mentioned must needs be understood of some arch heretic; and full wisely, forsooth, they apply it to Luther and Calvin. But we affirm, that it is to be understood of the Pope: for was there ever any such arch-heretic as he *which opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God*, and against all imperial powers, as the apostle saith. But now let us proceed to the description of him.

First, he is said to have the key of the bottomless-pit, which agreeth well to the Pope; for he hath power given him to open hell-gates, to let in thousands thither; but no power to open heaven-gates, to let in any thither: for he furthereth many to hell, none to heaven. He doth indeed falsely challenge to himself the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to let in and shut out at his pleasure. But here we see the Holy Ghost doth attribute no such power unto him, but only telleth us, that his power and jurisdiction is in hell, and over hell; and as for heaven, he hath nothing to do with it. It were needless to shew how this metaphor of keys is taken for power and jurisdiction in the scriptures, as hath been proved before, chap. i. 18. and as needless to prove, that by the bottomless-pit, is here meant hell, as appeareth in chap. xi. 7. and chap. xx. 1.

And he opened the bottomless-pit; and there arose

a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit, Rev. ix. 2.

Here we see how the Pope opened hell-gates with his key, and a most horrible, gross, and offensive smoke ascended up into the air presently upon it, insomuch, that both the sun and the air were darkened with it. Which all is to be understood of that spiritual darkness, ignorance, superstition, and idolatry wherewith the whole Church was overspread, after the great Antichrist came to the possession of his cursed chair, and was in his pride and height, ruling and reigning over the kings of the earth. For then, indeed, the sun was darkened and eclipsed; that is, the light of the gospel was almost put out. For that which is spoken here of the darkening of the air and the sun, is to be understood of a greater and more general darkness than that which was mentioned in the former chapter, wherein but a third part of the world was darkened. But now that Antichrist invadeth the Church, all is overspread with dismal darkness, all is as dark as pitch; no man can see where he is, or which way he goeth. For the whole air is filled with a thick smoke, which came out of hell pit.

And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power, Rev. ix. 3.

By these locusts is meant the Pope's clergy, as abbots, monks, friars, and priests; which are properly compared to locusts, because they waste and destroy the Church, even as locusts destroy the

fruits of the earth. For both historians and travellers do affirm, that whole fields of green corn, new come up, have been wasted and eaten up in one night as bare as the earth, by swarms of locusts in the east countries. For in those parts of the world multitudes of these little vermin are to be found: even so the Popish clergy consumeth and devoureth all green things in the Church.

Moreover it is said, that power was given them to sting like scorpions. For whom have they not stung with their most venomous stings? I mean their abominable errors, and villainous devices. Whom have they not wounded with their corrupt doctrine and devilish authority? They are the sorest soul-stingers that ever the world had, who have left their venomous stings in the souls of many thousand thousands, wherewith they have been poisoned and stung to death.

And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads, Rev. ix. 4.

It may be demanded, what became of the Church when the whole earth was full of these crawling and stinging locusts? This question is now here answered: to wit, that these locusts are charged and commanded that they should not hurt any of the elect: for this woe, and this plague extendeth no further than to the inhabitants of the earth, as we heard before. Their power is limited only to the reprobate; they have nothing to do with God's

chosen people. And here again we see what great care God hath for his in the midst of the greatest dangers, as hath been twice observed before, chap. vii. and chap. viii. For now, though Antichrist is reigning in his full pride, yet his elect are preserved in the midst of these scorpion locusts, flying about their ears like swarms of hornets, not one of them is stung to death. Christ's little flock is always defended, and set in safety.

And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torments was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man, Rev. ix. 5.

Some write, that such as are stung by a scorpion do not die immediately, but have a lingering pain, wherewith they are miserably vexed three or four days before they expire. Now unto this lingering pain is this spiritual stinging compared; for these locusts are commanded of God that they should not kill the very reprobates outright, and at once, but torment them with a lingering death for the space of five months, that is, five hundred years; for so long did the Papacy continue in its height and pride, full of strength and virtue; and so long did the Pope and his clergy sting men with scorpion-like pain.

And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them, Rev. ix. 6.

This verse shews that all Papists, being thus stung and tormented in their consciences with this lingering pain of Popish doctrine, shall wish them-

selves out of the world, and buried quick, that they might be rid of their spiritual stinging and hellish torments which they had in their consciences. For the Popish doctrine hath no sound comfort in it: for it leaveth men in desperation, in sickness, and upon their death-beds. For, alas, what comfort can a poor distressed conscience have in Popes' pardons, indulgences, masses, dirges, merits, works, pilgrimages, purgatory, crosses, crucifixes, agnus dei's, and such like trash and trumpery? These, alas, are too weak remedies for any spiritual diseases: they are not sufficient to procure pardon at God's hand for any sin. Alas, the poor blind Papists did know and feel that they were vile sinners; they knew they must come to judgment; they knew that the reward of sin was death, even the second death: they knew all this full well, and therefore had horrible convulsions in their consciences, and knew not how to obtain relief. For the doctrine of free justification in the blood of Christ was hid from them; they knew it not; and therefore all assurance of God's favour, all peace of conscience, and all joy in the Holy Ghost, was utterly taken from them, and therefore many of them died in a most wretched and uncomfortable manner. And for this cause it is here said that they sought death, and desired to be rid of the world one way or another: for a tormented conscience who can bear? it is a kind of hell torment.

And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto the battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the

faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions, Rev. ix. 7, 8.

Hitherto we have heard of the pedigree and poisoned stings of these vile locusts, and how they vexed the inhabitants of the earth all the time of the great Antichrist. Now we are to understand of their form and likeness: for the Spirit of God doth here paint them out in their colours, that all men may discern them, and beware of them.

First, it is said that they were like unto horses prepared unto battle; that is, they were as strong and fierce as war horses, to rush and run upon all such as should but once murmur and mutter against them, or their authority. Moreover, they have crowns of gold upon their heads; which sheweth and signifieth that they were the conquerors of the earth, and lords of the world; and who but they? For in those days no man, nay, no lord or king, durst speak against a monk, a friar, or a priest; for if they did they were sure to be punished for it. They had also faces like the faces of men; that is, they set fair faces upon matters, and pretended great devotion in religion, flattering the people, and making them believe that they could give them pardon for all their sins, and bring them to heaven; when, as in very truth, for the gratification of their appetites, and for the purpose of enriching themselves, they made a traffick of their religion with the great and the affluent, by setting fair faces upon their proceedings; and as St. Peter saith (2 Peter. chap. ii. 3.), *Through covetousness*

and with fained words, they made merchandize of men's souls, and did closely wind themselves into the hearts of the simple people by their fawning insinuations, being in very deed most notable flatterers and hypocrites.

They had hair as the hair of women ; that is, they were altogether effeminate, being given to delicacy, lust, and wantonness, and drowned in debauchery and every kind of excess. Their teeth were as the teeth of lions, to catch and snatch all that they could come by. They got the Church livings into their hands ; they first made impropriations ; they encroached upon temporal men's lands ; and they enriched themselves by the most oppressive means. If we turn our eyes toward their abbies, priories, and nunneries, we may easily judge what teeth they had. Moreover it is said they had labergeons, like to the habergeons of iron ; that is, they were so strongly armed with the defence and countenance of the Pope, that no secular power durst resist their oppressors. Their wings were like the sound of chariots, when many horses run into battle ; that is, with noise and terrible threatenings they strove to uphold their kingdom. Also in Churches and pulpits they make a roaring noise, and with violent harangues seek to maintain their abominable idolatry. They had tails like unto scorpions ; and there were stings in their tails. For with their poisoned doctrine, and stinging authority, like adders and snakes, they stung many to death. Moreover, power was given them to hurt men five months ; that is, all the time of Antichrist's reign, as before shewn.

And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless-pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon, Rev. ix. 11.

As the fowls are said to have a king over them, which is the eagle; and the beasts, the lion; and mortal men, some chief governor, under whose protection and subjection they live; so here these abominable locusts are said to have a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit; that is, the devil or the Pope, which you will, under whose ensign they fight, and under whose defence they live. Their king's name in Hebrew is called Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon. These words are both of one signification, that is, destroying: for both the devil himself, and his vicar, the Pope, are destroyers and wasters of the Church of God.

One woe is past: and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter, Rev. ix. 12.

We have heard at large what this first woe is, namely, the plague of the world, by the Pope and his clergy. Now we are to hear of the second woe, which is the most immense and destructive armies of the Turks, whereby the third part of men were slain. Some do expound this second woe, of the kingdom of Antichrist and his armies; but that it is not so, may appear by these reasons following:

First, the angel denouncing woe, woe, woe, denounceth three several woes; and therefore it is said, *One woe is past: and, behold, there come two more woes hereafter.* It followeth then, that this is

a distinct and separate woe from the former, and therefore cannot be same.

Secondly, this woe containeth a bodily slaughter of the third part of the world, and of the wicked reprobates: but the first woe was a plague of men's souls, as we have heard; and therefore this cannot be the same with the first.

Thirdly, we are to understand that this book describeth all the greatest calamities and plagues that should come upon the world in any age after Christ; and therefore we may justly think, that the kingdom of the Turks is not left out, seeing it was one of the greatest plagues that ever came upon the world. But the kingdom of the Turks is described in no other part of this Revelation, and therefore must of necessity be here described.

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates, Rev. ix. 13, 14.

Now we are come to the description of the second woe, which followeth upon the blowing of the sixth trumpet by the sixth angel. And first of all he saith *he heard a voice from the four corners of the golden altar*. From this altar the voice cometh to the *angel which blew the sixth trumpet*, that we might know it is the voice of the mighty God, and the commandment of our Lord Jesus. The voice commandeth the sixth angel to *loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates*. By

these four angels which are thus bound in Euphrates, is meant many devils, or angels of darkness, as we have heard before, chap. vii. 1. Their *binding* signifieth their restraint, by which they were held back from doing that mischief which they desired to do. Their *loosing* signifieth that power was given them to perform that which they wished.

They are said *to be four in number*, because they should raise a dreadful plague in the four corners of the earth, both east, west, north, and south. The sense is, that the devils have yet farther and greater scope given them to plague and destroy the inhabitants of the earth. These devils had exceeding great power in the kingdom of Antichrist; but they are insatiable in mischief, and therefore they only appear quiet till they have an opportunity of accomplishing their desires. The place where they lie bound is Euphrates, wherein is a mystery; for Euphrates, literally taken, is a great river, which ran so nigh the city of Bablylon, in Chaldea, that it was a mighty defence unto it, so that the city could not be taken until they that laid siege unto it, cut out trenches, and turned the waters another way. Now for the mystery, it is this: Rome, in this book, is called Bablylon. By a metaphor, and after the same manner, the great river Euphrates, as we shall see afterward, chap. xvi. signifieth the power, wealth, and authority which that city of Rome, even this western Babel, hath to defend itself. Then it followeth, that in this power, authority, and strength of Rome, the devils lie bound; for they waited, through the power of Rome, to work

yet far greater mischief, and therefore are said to be bound so long as they were restrained. The mischief which they plotted and purposed to bring to pass, by the power and authority of Rome, was the hatching and bringing forth of the Mahometan religion, which in very deed did spring from the darkness of Rome, as from its proper root and original cause.

The devils did foresee, that out of the superstitions and idolatries of Rome, defended by their great power and authority, the Mahometan religion might very well be framed; and therefore not being contented with plaguing the western part of the world with Popery and idolatry, they do greedily desire also to plague the east part of the world with the false religion of Mahomet. They are not satisfied with filling and poisoning all Europe with abominable idolatries, except also they plague and infect all Asia and Africa with the Turk's most execrable religion: so insatiable are the devils in working mischief. Now in the meantime they think themselves too much confined, bound, and tied up in Rome and Romish religion, except they may be loosed, and proceed further to overspread the whole world with their impieties and infamous abominations. A man would think, that when the devils had prevailed so far as to place Antichrist in his cursed chair, and to breed the swarms of locusts out of the smoke of hell, they might have been satisfied: for then, as we say, hell seemed to be broke loose. But yet all this cannot satisfy these evil spirits, but they will have the religion of Mahomet

established, to poison and plague all the east parts of the world in their souls; and also they will have the most huge, cruel, and savage armies of the Turks raised up, to murder and massacre millions of men in their bodies, in the western parts of the world, as presently we shall hear. Now till all this be effected they are said to lie bound at Rome. But here we see, that this sixth angel hath a direct commandment from Jesus Christ to loose these devils which lay bound in the great river Euphrates, that they might plague the whole world far and near, at their pleasure. So now all these malignant spirits are let loose, let us hear what followeth.

And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men, Rev. ix. 15.

Now the devils being loosed and unbound by a special commandment from Christ, were in readiness to execute their mischief. This ascending by degrees, from a short time unto longer and longer, *from an hour to a day, &c.* doth signify, that as the evil spirits were prest, and at hand at an hour's warning, as we say, to put in practice whatsoever they had plotted; so they were as forward to continue the same *from an hour to a day, from a day to a month, and from a month to a year*; that is, from time to time, until the date of their commission was out: for their time was limited, and their commission bounded, as afterward we shall see. And this is our comfort, that both the Papacy is limited to five months, and the Turkish power to hours, days, months, and years. The devils powers are limited.

though it grieveth them full sore. They cannot do what they desire; they cannot continue as long as they would.

And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand: and I heard the number of them, Rev. ix. 16.

Now, upon the loosing of these devils, here followeth the description of a most dreadful plague which they raised up; and it is an army, a murdering army, an army in number exceeding great: for he saith, *They were twenty thousand times ten thousand*; that is, two hundred millions, or two hundred thousand thousands. But we may not think that this army was ever all at one time, or in any one age; but here are the armies of many ages reckoned up, and the full plague of many years set forth. But, it may asked, how could St. John number such an army? He answers this doubt, and saith, *I heard the number of them.* He did not number them; but the number was told him.

Moreover it is to be observed, that as this army did exceed in number, so also in terror and strength, and therefore they are said to be all horsemen. For an army of horsemen are both stronger and more terrible than an army of footmen.

And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions: and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone, Rev. ix. 17.

Here is the description of the horsemen and

horses, as they appeared to John in a vision. First, touching the horsemen; it is said that they were very well armed *with breast-plates*, that is, coats of mail or corslets, and that *of a fiery colour, and of the colour of jacinth*, that is of smoke, as appeareth in the last clause of this verse, *and also of the colour of brimstone*. For as it was usual for horsemen in compleat armour to wear in their breast-plates and targets certain ensigns and colours, whereby they might appear terrible to their enemies, so these Turkish warriors and horsemen do hold out their colours of fire, smoke, and brimstone, as it were flags of defiance against the whole world, threatening present death to all that should withstand them.

Now, as concerning their horses, no doubt but they were as fierce as the horsemen. *They had heads like lions*; that is, they were full of mettle and fierceness, *and out of their mouths went forth fire, and smoke, and brimstone*; that is, they had the same colours and ensigns upon them that their riders had.

By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths, Rev. ix. 18.

Here is set down the great slaughters and devastation which these martial horsemen and Turkish armies made throughout the most part of Europe. For he saith, *The third part of men*, that is, great numbers in Europe, *were slain by the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone, which came out of their mouths*: that is, by their cruelty and barbarous inhumanity, some being murdered in their bodies by cruel and

lingering deaths, and others violently drawn to the wicked religion of Mahomet. For, partly by external violence, and partly by a subtle shew of religion and devotion, they destroyed thousands both in their souls and bodies. And therefore it is said, *Their power is in their mouths, and in their tails*, Rev. ix. 19. For their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads wherewith they hurt.

But, for the better understanding of these things, I think it not amiss a little to open and lay forth the rising up, and increasing of the power of the Turk.

About the year of our Lord 591 was Mahomet born, in a certain village of Arabia, called Itrarix; for so does history report. This Mahomet, by fraud and cunning, grew into credit and fame among the seditious Arabians and Egyptians, insomuch that they made him a captain over them, to war against the Persians.

After this he married a rich wife, and by that means he won the hearts of many with gifts. In the days of Heraclius, the emperor, which was in the year of our Lord 623, he grew to be very mighty. After this he feigned himself to be a prophet, and said that he had visions and revelations, and talked with angels. And by the help of Sergius, a monk, he framed a new worship and religion, forming it partly out of the Old Testament, partly from the Papists, and partly from the heathen. He reigned nine years, and so died.

After him succeeded in the kingdom of the Saracens, Ebubezar, who reigned two years; Haumar, who reigned twelve years; Muhavias, who reigned

twenty-four years · all these made war against the Persians, and sundry other nations, and overcame them, and set up the religion of Mahomet among them ; and by these means the kingdom of the Saracens grew mighty : but in process of time the kingdom of the Turks grew great, and the kingdom of the Saracens diminished. Within a short time after this, the Tartars, a barbarous people, waxed strong, and made war against the Turks, and prevailed greatly for a time. But, about the year of our Lord 1300, the empire of the Tartars was overthrown, and the empire of the Turks flourished more than ever it did before. For now come the greatest monsters, and most savage and cruel tyrants of all : the first of them was Ottoman, the second Bajazet, and the third was Amurath. These made bloody wars against the Christians, (I mean the Papists in Europe,) and enlarged the Turk's dominions very much.

They did at various times so cruelly murder the inhabitants of the west with their immense and sanguinary armies, that at last the Pope, the emperor, the king of Hungary, the king of Poland, the king of France, the duke of Burgundy, the duke of Venice, and almost all the potentates in Europe, entered into an alliance for the purpose of resisting the aggressions of the Turks, but without success : for so immense were the armies of those barbarians, that they bore down all opposition, and devastated Europe with fire and sword.

Then we see that verified which here was foretold, to wit, *That the immense armies of the Turks, with their horses and horsemen, should slay the third*

part of men: that is, the idolaters in Europe, by heaps and infinite numbers.

To relate the particular battles between the Turks and the Christians in Europe, and their horrible blood-shedding, would require a volume; but this which I have briefly mentioned, may serve to give some light unto it, and may suffice for the understanding of the text.

Now it is said in the next verse, that notwithstanding this heavy hand of God which was upon the Papists in Europe, and these dreadful judgments and massacres, they repented not of their idolatries, but waxed worse and worse: for no judgments, no plagues, can make the wicked any better, as we see in the examples of Pharaoh and Saul. And here it is said, *And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts*, Rev. ix. 20, 21.

And thus we see how the devils which were bound in Euphrates, being let loose upon the world, in the wrath and just judgment of God, did terribly plague both the Turks, in their souls, and the Papists in their bodies. The one with false religion, the other with bloody swords: and so was the desire of the devil fully satisfied.

CHAP. X.

HAVING opened and expounded the two first woes which fell out upon the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpet, containing the two great plagues of Popery and Mahomedanism, wherewith the world was punished many hundred years; now in this chapter we are to hear of good news and great comfort, after so much sorrow. For here our Lord Jesus Christ cometh down from heaven to deliver his poor afflicted Church, and to be revenged of all his cruel enemies. For now before the third and last woe, containing the greatest plague of all upon the world, which is the last judgment; wherein the wicked shall be tormented in hell-fire for ever, both in body and soul; I say, before the sounding of the seventh trumpet by the seventh angel, of which we shall hear in the next chapter. Now, in the meantime, is shewed in this chapter what care God had for his little flock, which, no doubt, were hid in those days, and did not appear; and yet were scattered in corners, even in the midst of the darkness of Popery, and the most furious rage of the Turkish armies. And therefore the principal scope and drift of this chapter, is to shew how the gospel should be preached in many kingdoms, now after this general darkness, for the discovering and overthrow both of Popery and Mahometanism, and to shew what should fall out in the Church now in the middle time, before the seventh and last trumpet sound;

for then cometh the last judgment, as the angel sweareth in this chapter, ver. 6, 7.

This chapter contains four principal parts, which are as follows:

The first is a description of Christ and his glory.

The second sheweth how the gospel should be preached in many nations and kingdoms, by the ministers of this last age, whereby all adversary power should be overthrown.

The third is a watch-word given to the world by Christ, that when the seventh angel should sound the trumpet the world should end.

The last shews how all faithful preachers being called and authorised by Christ, should labour and take pains in the study of God's book, and afterward should publish the knowledge thereof far and near.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire, Rev. x. 1.

This angel of might is our Lord Christ, as appeareth by the description of him, and by all the consequences that follow: for he is said to be *clothed with a cloud*, which signifieth his great glory and majesty. *For he shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge the world*; that is, with great pomp and glory. *The rainbow was upon his head*; which signifieth the covenant of peace with his Church, as before, chap. iv. 3. *His face was as the sun*; which signifieth comfort and deliverance to his Church, and the dispelling of all the smoke of the bottomless

pit, as the sun scattereth and driveth away the thick mists.

His feet were as pillars of fire, which signifieth that he should tread down all his enemies under his feet, both Pope and Turk: *for he must reign till he have destroyed them all.* The Pope a long time kept all the kings of Europe in submission. The locusts were of great power. The Turks prevailed, and extended their empire exceedingly. But what are they all to this mighty and glorious angel Christ? What is their power to withstand him? What can Abaddon, the king of the locusts, do against this mighty King of Sion? What can the Turk's most terrible horses and horsemen do against this Angel which sitteth upon the white horse? Alas, alas, they are able to do nothing! They must all be trodden down under his feet of fire.

And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, Rev. x. 2.

This little book signifieth the Bible.

It is called little in respect of the great and huge volumes of Popish books, though in itself it be large.

It is said to be open, that all men might look into it, because it had been shut a long time before, even during all the time of the darkening of the sun and air by the smoke which came out of the bottomless pit. But although it was long shut up in the time of Popery, and lay buried in a strange tongue, yet now it is opened, and publicly preached by all the servants of God. And all this, no doubt, is to be

understood of Luther's time, and all the times ever since the gospel was spread abroad after the great darkness. For, some hundred years ago it was hard to find an English Bible, but now, God be thanked, there are thousands to be found in the hands of God's people. And therefore the things here prophesied of, are fulfilled in our days: for we live under the opening of the seventh seal, and the sounding of the sixth trumpet, and the pouring forth of the sixth vial, as here doth partly appear, and shall, God willing, be made more manifest when we come to the sixteenth chapter.

Now we are diligently to observe, that as the opening of this book, and the preaching of the gospel by Luther and his successors, hath dispersed the former darkness, and beaten down Popery, so also hath it driven back the Turk, and taken from us all fear of him, which in former ages was the terror of the world; for since men have looked into this book, repented of their idolatry, and turned unto God with all their hearts, the Turk and his power hath not been feared, especially in these parts where the gospel has been preached.

For God, in his merciful providence towards his Church, hath diverted his power another way, and set him work elsewhere. So that if men cannot be brought to believe that God raised him up as a scourge for idolaters, and a plague for idolatry and other foul sins, according to the words in the former chapter, where it is said, *They repented not of the works of their hands, &c.* yet when they see, that at the opening of the book of God, and for

saking idolatry, the fear of him is removed, let them believe it.

Moreover it is said, that *he put his right foot upon the sea, and his left on the earth.*

And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices, Rev. x. iii.

This crying with a loud voice, like the roaring of a lion, signifies the manifestation of the wrath of Christ against all his enemies : for now he beginneth to roar against them, as a lion when he is hungry roareth for his prey.

By the seven thunders which uttered their voices, is meant those perfect and exquisite judgments which were now to be inflicted both upon the kingdom of the Pope and the Turk. We have heard before that seven is a perfect number in this book, and that thunder is put for the thundering of God's wrath, and all such broils and plagues as follow thereupon; and this is the reason of this interpretation.

And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not, Rev. x. 4.

It should seem these seven thunders did so speak, as they might be understood, for John was about to write the things which they spake, thinking that they were uttered for that end and purpose, that he should deliver them in writing to the Churches. But he receiveth a commandment to the contrary:

for he is willed not to write them, but to conceal them until the appointed time.

But some may say, Why were they uttered, seeing they must be concealed and kept close? I answer, it was not in vain. For, first, though the particulars be not expressed what the thunders spake, yet we are taught that there remains most fearful judgments against all the oppressors of the Church, which Christ hath thundered out with terror against them. And when the time determined is come, they shall be seen and understood; but in the meantime they are sealed up, and kept close, according to that of Job. *Why should not the times be had of the Almighty, so as they which know him should not perceive the times appointed of him.* And that of Daniel: *These things are sealed up until the time determined.*

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, That there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets, Rev. x. 5, 6, 7.

The sum of these three verses is, that Christ giveth warning of the last judgment, that men might awake and look out in time: and because men, for the most part, are careless and secure,

putting the evil day far from them, as the prophet says. Therefore here Christ bindeth it with a solemn oath, and solemn gestures thereunto annexed, as was the lifting up of the hand in ancient time, Gen. xiv. 22.

The thing that our Lord Jesus declareth, is, that *there should be time no longer*; that is, time as it is now, or the present course and current of events.

And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth as sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings, Rev. x. 8, 9, 10, 11.

The brief sense of these four verses is, that the preachers of the gospel being called, allowed, and authorized by Christ unto their ministry, should study the scriptures with great diligence, even until they had, as it were, eaten, digested, and made the word of God a part of themselves; and that then they should preach and publish unto all nations and kingdoms these truths and doctrines of the gospel, which now a long time had remained hid in the reign of Antichrist. It is to be observed, that John, in this place, represents the person of all the mini-

sters of the gospel which should be raised up in these last days for the overthrow of Antichrist, and the restoration of true religion : for John himself did not live to these times.

Further it is to be observed, that all godly students and zealous ministers do eat up the book of God, by reading, study, prayer, and meditation ; and they find it sweet in their mouth ; that is, they find and feel great joy and comfort in the study and meditation thereof, especially when God revealeth thereby great and hidden secrets unto them ; and giveth them to understand the mysteries of the gospel, and councils of his will, which are locked up from the wise and prudent of this world. This, I say, is sweeter unto their mouth than honey, and the honey-comb. Concerning this phrase of eating up the book, see Ezekiel ii. 9. for here the Holy Ghost alludeth thereunto.

This book being sweet in the mouth, yet being eaten and digested, is bitter in the belly.

There may be three reasons given for this bitterness, viz.

First, because it being once taken down into our soul by godly meditation, doth mortify our corrupt nature, and bring under our lust, and therefore seemeth bitter to flesh and blood.

Secondly, because afflictions and trials frequently follow the sound digestion of the gospel.

Thirdly, because the doctrine of the gospel being swallowed by the ministers thereof, is not then useless and forgotten, but, as a bitter and invigorating medicine, it imparts health and activity to their

whole frame, in order that they may be prepared and strengthened for the constant and laborious duties which lie before them. And for this cause it is said in the last verse, that they *must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*

Now blessed be the name of the Lord our God, who hath given us to live in this age, wherein we do with our eyes behold and see the fulfilling of all these things. Let us therefore praise God for this great work which we see wrought in our days; and let us still more and more magnify this little book, which will utterly destroy Popery, and bring down the proud Antichrist, do all that fight for him what they can.

CHAP. XI.

WE have heard that the little book should be opened, and the gospel preached and published to many nations and kingdoms, after the great darkness of Popery, and that this was done by Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Peter Virit, Peter Martyr, Bullinger, Bucer, and all their faithful successors unto this day. Now, in this chapter we are to understand the effect and good success of their preaching and publishing the gospel; which was that the Church should be restored, reformed, and built up thereby, which a long time had been wasted and oppressed by the tyranny of Antichrist; and that

many should embrace this gospel, forsake their idolatries, and turn unto God with all their hearts; yea, whole nations and kingdoms in Europe should be converted to the faith, as we see at this day, God be praised. So then the principal object of this chapter, is to shew those things which yet remain to be fulfilled under the sounding of the sixth trumpet, which is the preaching and prevailing of the gospel, even unto the world's end; and also the thing which follow upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which is the resurrection and last judgment.

This chapter contains six principal things, as it were six parts thereof.

First, it sheweth how the true Church should be gathered together, and built up by the preaching of the gospel, and all the wicked refused and cast out.

Secondly, it describes the builders; that is, all the faithful ministers which had, and should resist Antichrist.

Thirdly, it sheweth how Antichrist should persecute the preachers and professors of the gospel even unto death.

Fourthly, it shews that Papists, Atheists, and wicked worldings, should rejoice in the death of God's people, and, in many cases, not vouchsafe them so much as the honour of burial, but send gifts one to another for joy that they were destroyed.

Fifthly, it shews that, notwithstanding the rage and fury of the world in persecuting them to death, God should not only receive their souls to glory,

but also raise up others endued with the same spirit, which should preach, profess, and witness the same truth constantly and continually, even unto the end of the world.

Lastly, it shews that, after the preaching of the gospel some good time in this last age, the seventh angel should sound the trumpet, and the world should end.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein, Rev. xi. 1.

Here Jesus Christ giveth a reed unto John like unto a rod; and hereupon he is commanded by an angel to go about the measuring of the temple, the altar, &c.

By this measuring with a reed like a rod, is signified the restoring and building up of God's house, which now was greatly ruined, and run into decay through the long prevailing of Popery. Measuring with a reed, is taken for the building up of God's Church, after the decayed state thereof, both in Ezekiel, Zechariah, and this prophecy. John as the representative of all faithful ministers, hath this measuring rod given him, because the Church was to be restored and built up by the ministers and ministry of the gospel.

The thing to be measured is the temple, the altar, and them that worship therein.

This is an allusion to the legal worship whereby our spiritual worship is represented. For by the material temple, is meant the spiritual temple, or

Church of God. By the altar of stone, is meant the spiritual worship. By them that worship therein with carnal sacrifices, is meant the true members of the Church, which worship God in spirit and truth.

Now then, both the Church, the true worship, and worshippers, were all to be measured, repaired, and built up by the ministry of the word; which were all decayed, and almost laid waste by the Pope's tyrannical .

But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months, Rev. xi. 2.

John is here forbidden to measure and build up the court which is without the temple. Whereby is meant all heretics, hypocrites, worldlings, and all such as have a place in the Church, but are not of the Church. This phrase of speech is taken from the old typical worship, as the rest before. For in the temple of Jerusalem there was an outward court, which was common to all, good and bad: the holy place, which was proper to the priests and levites: and the holy of holiest, or most holy place, where none might come but the high priest.

Here is a reason added why the Lord God refuses all papists and hypocrites, and all such as belong to the outward court only, and it is this: that this outward court *is given unto the Gentiles*; that is, to all false Christians and counterfeits in religion, which are members of the visible Church, but have nothing to do with the invisible.

These are compared to Gentiles in two respects:

first, in regard to profaneness, for they are as profane as the heathen. Secondly, in respect of persecuting the truth: for hypocrites and atheists are as forward in persecuting the people of God as the heathen emperors, which persecuted the Church for the space of three hundred years. All comes in this, that when the Church should be gathered and built by the preaching of the gospel, God would have all papists, atheists, and hypocrites shut out.

Moreover, here is the second reason yielded why the outward court should be left out, and not measured: to wit, because *they should tread the holy city under foot forty and two months*; that is, they should persecute the Church all the time of Antichrist's reign. For forty-two months in this verse, and 1260 *days* in the next verse, and *three days and a half* in verse 9, and *time, times, and half a time* in the twelfth chapter and the fourteenth verse, and 1260 *days*, in the twelfth chapter and the sixth verse, doth signify all one thing, which is the short reign of Antichrist; for these months, these days, and these times, do every one of them make three years and an half. For who knoweth not that forty-two months make just three years and an half; and that 1260 days maketh even so much also; and by time, he means a year; by times, two years; and by half a time, half a year. Now the reason why Antichrist's reign is numbered by days, months, and half-times, and all amounting but to three years and an half, is to shew the short continuance thereof, for the comfort of the Church, as appeareth more fully and plainly in various places of this prophecy, where it

is mentioned in plain words that Antichrist should reign but a short time; for what is five or six hundred years in comparison with eternity.

But here the Papists do shew themselves most sottish and ridiculous, in that they would gather from hence that the Pope is not Antichrist: for, say they, Antichrist shall reign but three years and an half, but the Pope hath reigned many years; therefore the Pope is not Antichrist.

Now to answer the proposition of their argument, taken from this place. First, it may be answered, that this place is not to be understood literally, but mystically; as many other things in this book.

Secondly, here is a certain number put for an uncertain; a definite number for an indefinite; which also is usual in this book, as we heard before concerning the sealing of the tribes, of every tribe 12,000, which maketh 144,000. Now no man is so mad as to think there were just so many sealed, and neither more nor less.

Thirdly, here is an allusion to Daniel's weeks, and other prophetical computations; wherein, sometimes, a day is put for a year; a week for seven years, as in Daniel; and a month for thirty years. So then I conclude, that it is extreme folly to interpret this place literally.

The curious and frivolous interpretations of this and other chapters in this book, by some writers, I purposely omit, as being untrue, unsound, and unjudicial: for I only, in this book, seek the sense that is, and not the sense which is not, as hath been said before.

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand and two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth, Rev. xi. 3.

Having set down how Antichrist and his company, being those Gentiles which possess the outward court, should tread down the holy city; that is, the true Church of God for a short time: now he cometh to shew, that even in the height and pride of the Pope's power and government, yet the Church was not entirely extinct; God did never utterly forsake it; but in all ages, and at all times, God raised up one or other to withstand all Popish proceedings: which is here meant by the two witnesses. For assuredly these two witnesses do not signify Enoch and Elias, as the Papists and some others do dream but they signify all the faithful preachers and professors of the truth, which in all ages, both former and latter, have opposed themselves against the Pope, his clergy, his doctrine, his religion, and all his abominable proceedings.

They are called *witnesses*, because they should bear witness unto the truth.

They are said to be two in number, for three reasons, viz.

First, because they were very few in those days when Popery did so generally prevail, for two is the smallest number.

Secondly, because the law of God doth admit of no less number in bearing witness, as it is written, *In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word stand.*

Thirdly, It is an allusion to Zerubbabel and Joshua, which were the two restorers and builders of the temple after the captivity. Christ saith here, that *he will give power to his two witnesses*: for no man hath any power in heavenly things except it be given to him from above; and especially to stand fast to the truth in the heat of persecutions and troubles.

It is said, that these *two witnesses shall prophecy*; that is preach, declare, and speak. For so prophecy is taken in the former chapter, and last verse; so also in other places of the scripture.

The time of their prophesying, being 1260 days, have been expounded before.

These two witnesses *are clothed in sackcloth*; which signifieth that they should lead a sorrowful life in this world. For in old time, when men did fast and mourn, they did use to put on sackcloth. It followeth then, that these faithful preachers, and witnesses of the truth, did not spend their days in mirth, jollity, and worldly pomp and vanity, as did the Pope's clergy, and pompous prelates of Antichrist.

Now if any man will demand how this may appear that there have been always some raised up by God to write, preach, declare, and speak against the whore of Babylon, even when she was aloft, and reigned as the queen and lady of the world; I answer, that history records the names of many who have, at various times, preached against the idolatrous doctrines of Rome; and that it is plainly

proved, that in all countries and kingdoms of Europe there were ever some stirred up to impugne and resist the whore of Babylon : as,

In England.—Robert Grosted, bishop of Lincoln, in the year 1293 ; John Wickliffe, supported by Edward III. and divers of the nobility in England, 1400.

In Germany.—Taulerus, a preacher, 1354 ; Franciscus Petracha, 1356 ; Johannes de Rupescissa, 1357 ; Conradus Hager, 1359 ; Gerhardus Rhidor and Petrus de Corbona, 1360 ; Johannes de Poliacco and John Zisca, 1420.

In Bohemia.—John Husse, 1414 ; — Jerome, of Prague, 1416 ; Mathias Parisiensis, 1370.

In Spain.—Arnoldus de Nova Villa, 1250.

In Italy.—Jerome Savonarola, a monk, and — Silvester, a friar, 1500

In France.— — Waldas, (of whom came the Waldenses, or poor men of Lyons, in France,) 1160 ; Guilienus de Sancto Amore, 1252 ; Robert Gallus, 1290 ; — Laurentius, 1290.

In Ireland.— — Armachanus, an archbishop, 1362.

In Swabia.—Many preachers at once, 1240.

In Greece.—All the Churches renounced the Church of Rome for their abominable idolatry, 1230.

It were too tedious to recite the names of all who are celebrated by historians as having withstood both the Pope and Popery, even when it did most of all bear the sway ; these may suffice for the understanding of the text. As for those which have been

raised up since the decay and fall of Popery; I mean since Luther's time, they are so many, and so well known, that I need say nothing.

These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth, Rev. xi. 4.

Here the two witnesses are compared to two olive-trees, because, as the olive-tree yields its oil and fruitfulness, so the ministers of Christ distribute upon the Church the sweet balm of the spirit, which is, all heavenly and spiritual graces: as the metaphor of oil is often so taken in the scriptures.

They are also compared to two candlesticks; because, that as the candlestick beareth up the candle set upon it, so the ministers of the gospel support and hold forth the light of God's word, even in the greatest darkness.

These candlesticks are said *to stand before the God of the earth*; because God beareth rule, not only in heaven, but in earth also, even then when all things in the earth seem to be most troubled, and the Church militant under great persecutions, as now it was.

And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will, Rev. xi. 5, 6.

Here is shewed, that if any despise the simplicity of these two witnesses, and treat them with con-

tempt, because of their meekness and humility, that there is a fire cometh out of their mouth ; that is, the mighty power of the word of God issuing out of their mouths, which overthroweth and overturneth their enemies ; nay, as fire, it consumeth them to ashes : for the ministers of the gospel are armed *with ready vengeance against all disobedience*. Therefore those must be deranged, and know not what they do, who oppose themselves against the true ministers of Christ. For the sword which they fight with slayeth the reprobates in their souls, though not in their bodies : for the ministry of the word is the savour of death to all unbelievers.

That which is here spoken, of *shutting the heavens that it rain not, and turning the waters into blood*, is an allusion to Elias and Moses. Whereof the one, by his prayer, shut the heavens ; the other, by his rod, turned the waters into blood. Now the faithful ministers of the gospel are compared to these two, not because these should work such outward miracles as they did, but because they should be furnished with spiritual power, which is far greater. For most sure it is, that the invisible and spiritual power wherewith the ministers of the gospel are armed, is very great and glorious, though the world see it not, nor know it not. For the apostle saith, *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of holds, casting down imaginations, and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, &c.* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

And when they shall have finished their testimony,

the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them, Rev. xi. 7.

This passage alludes to the relentless tyranny, and barbarous cruelty with which Antichrist should oppress these faithful witnesses of our Lord Jesus. For although they overcome him with the spiritual sword, which is the fire that cometh out of their mouths, yet, for a time, power was given to this beast that ascendeth from the bottomless pit; that is, the Pope and his adherents, who have permission for a limited time to persecute God's saints, and put them to the sword; but it is to be observed, that Antichrist can do nothing till the two witnesses have finished their testimony: such is God's care and providence for all his faithful servants.

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified, Rev. xi. 8.

By the great city here, is meant Rome; and yet not the city only of Rome, but all the Roman empire, power, and jurisdiction, as afterward shall be made manifest. Now the bodies of those which were massacred in all nations by Antichrist's tyranny, are here said to lie in the streets of Rome, that is, to be cast forth into the open fields, as not worthy the honour of burial in all places, countries, and kingdoms, within the Roman empire or jurisdiction of Rome; as we read to have been in England, Scotland, France, Ireland, Germany, and Spain. And, as the Holy Ghost saith, *the dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat to the fowls of the heaven,*

and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.

Moreover it is to be observed, that Rome is here compared, spiritually, to Sodom and Egypt. To Sodom for wickedness ; for what city ever was, or is more wicked than Rome, *the mother of whoredoms, and the abominations of the earth.* And to Egypt for idolatry, and keeping God's people in spiritual bondage.

Last of all, it is here said that our Lord Jesus was crucified at Rome ; which may seem strange, since all men know that Christ was crucified at Jerusalem. But to answer this doubt, we are to understand that, in respect of the place, our Lord Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem : but if we look to the power and authority that put him to death, he was crucified at Rome ; for Christ was put to death by a Roman judge, by Roman laws, by Roman authority, by a kind of death proper only to the Romans, and in a place which then was within the Roman empire. And for this cause it is here said that Christ was crucified at Rome.

And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves, Rev. xi. 9.

Hitherto we have heard of the rage of Antichrist against the two witnesses. Now further we are to understand, of the malice and fury of all his adherents ; that is, all papists, atheists, and the rest of the blind people and seduced multitude, which did allow the Pope's cruelty, in shedding the blood of

the martyrs ; and they do testify the allowance and approbation of the Pope's fact, and also their own malice and madness against them in this ; that they will not vouchsafe them the honour of burial, but cast out their dead bodies as carrion, or as the dead bodies of dogs : thereby shewing that they thought them no better than beasts. Nay, we read that their frantic rage was so great and outrageous, that they wreaked their malice upon the dead bones ; they digged up the bodies of God's witnesses out of their graves, and burnt them to ashes.

Whereas it is said, *they shall see their dead bodies* ; the meaning is, that all the blind people within the Roman empire should be eye-witnesses of these things ; and not only so, but even great agents also in the slaughter of God's people.

By *three days and a half*, which is half a week, he meaneth all the time of Antichrist's reign and tyrannical government, as before hath been shewed. For these three days and a half, being in prophetic computation three years and a half, signify the same thing that the two and forty months, and a thousand two hundred and threescore days before.

And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another ; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth, Rev. xi. 10.

Here we see how the inhabitants of the earth, that is, the seduced multitude and blind people, in the time of ignorance, do greatly insult and triumph over the death of the Lord's witnesses ; and they express their joy by sending gifts and presents one

to another, as if they had received some great benefits, or had heard the most joyful news in the world. And the reason is added, because they vexed and tormented them: meaning thereby, that the preaching of the truth, and the reproving of their errors, idolatries, and manifold impieties, was a dagger and a torment unto them, which they could by no means endure: for the preaching of the gospel is the torment of the world, and the preachers the tormentors. These few preachers thundering against their superstitions, and abominable service of Antichrist, did vex every vein in their heart, and inwardly so wound their consciences, that they could have no rest till they had dispatched them out of the world. But now, having made riddance of them, they are very joyful.

And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them, Rev. xi. 11.

Notwithstanding the rage and savage fury of the Pope and his followers, yet here is shewed that they could not prevail as they desired: for within three days and a half, that is, when the date of Antichrist's reign was expired, and the time come that Popery must be disclosed by the light of the gospel breaking forth: there followeth a great alteration. For these two prophets, or witnesses, are raised up again. For he saith, the spirit of life, which came from God, shall enter into them, and they shall stand upon their feet.

This may seem somewhat strange: but it is not
No. 7.

to be understood that they should be raised up bodily in their persons till the last resurrection, but that God would raise up others endued with the same spirit, which should vigorously defend both the doctrine, cause, and quarrel, which their predecessors had maintained, and sealed with their blood : in whom they should, as it were, revive, and live again ; even as Elias did revive, and, as it were, live again in John Baptist, who is said to be endued with the power and the spirit of Elias, as it was foretold by the prophet, and as our Saviour himself doth assert.

Now blessed be God that we live in these days, wherein we see with our eyes all these things fulfilled. For when the Pope and his clergy had murdered Gerbardus, Dulcimus Navarrensis, Waldus, Nicholas Orem, John Picus, John Zisca, Visilus Groningensis, Armerius, Wickliffe, Husse, Jerome of Prague, and many other preachers, besides one hundred holy Christians in the country of Alsatia, and many other countries, and of all conditions of men ; yet for all that, spite of their hearts, God raised up others in their stead, as Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Peter Martyr, Peter Viret, Melancthon, Bucer, Bullinger, and their successors ; yea, the thousands of excellent ministers and preachers which are dispersed over all Europe at this day. In whom all the former witnesses do reign, and, as it were, stand upon their feet again. And now a great fear is come upon the Pope and his clergy, and all his favourites ; for they never imagined so great an alteration was possible. But this is the

Lord's doing, and it is very marvellous in our eyes.

And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them, Rev. xi. 12.

Here the Lord's witnesses, whom Antichrist had murdered, are called, and taken up into heaven, that they may be crowned with glory and immortality, having in the earth fought so excellent a fight of faith as they had. For even as Christ, their head, was taken up in a cloud into the heavens, even so his faithful members are here taken up in a cloud, to reign with him for ever. Moreover it is here said, that *their enemies shall see them ascending up*; they shall, as it were, ascend up in their sight: for from the fire and faggot, swords and spears of their enemies, they went directly unto God; and the very consciences of their persecutors did witness so much, nay, some of them being in dreadful convulsions of conscience, did not stick to utter it, avouching the innocency of God's martyrs: as sometimes Pilate and the centurion did of Christ. But though they had not been justified by their enemies, yet they are here justified by a great testimony: for the voice from heaven, the voice of God, doth justify them, and declares them worthy to be called up from the earth to heaven, and received into eternal glory. For howsoever the Pope and his clergy condemned them for heretics and schismatics, yet here they are justified and cleared, by a voice from heaven, which is

more than the voices, suffrages, and approbations of all men in the world.

And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven, Rev. xi. 13.

As he hath shewed before that the world was very joyful when they had destroyed God's witnesses: but afterwards full of fear and terror, when they saw what followed. So here in this verse is shewed, that at the same hour, that is, about the same time when they have persecuted the saints, and see thousands of others raised up in their stead, and as it were out of their blood, that there should immediately follow *a great earthquake*; that is, horrible commotions, seditions, tumults, and open wars among the kingdoms and nations of the world, and among all people which should live after the breaking forth of the light of the gospel, as we see at this present time. For who now in these days doth not see and feel this earthquake? Who knoweth not what stirs there have been, and are every where about religion? Who is ignorant of the wars, seditions, treacheries, treasons, and rebellions in Europe betwixt one kingdom and another, concerning the matter of religion? But mark what followeth. Behold the effects of this earthquake: it is said, that *the tenth part of the city shall fall*. By the city here, he meaneth the great city of Rome, mentioned before, verse 8; which is therefore called the great

city, because it was the chief city of the Roman empire, and the very seat of Antichrist. Now then the sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost is, that when there once beginneth to be *an earthquake*; that is, broils, contentions, altercations, questions, and disputes about religion; and that the Popish doctrine, which had so long prevailed in the world, should be called in question, nay, openly preached against, convicted, and condemned; that then Rome should begin to fall, and Romish religion to suffer a great eclipse, yea, the tenth part, that is some part of the city of Rome; which means that the doctrine and authority of Rome should be overthrown.

Now this falling of the tenth part of Rome, was fulfilled within some few years after the preaching of the gospel by Luther, and his immediate successors; but since it is gone back many degrees, and hereafter it shall still ebb and consume away by degrees, even till it come to nothing; as, God willing, shall be plainly proved hereafter.

Moreover here is set down another effect of this earthquake; which is, that thereby shall be slain in number seven thousand, that is, many thousands, for the number of seven is a perfect and universal number. But the sense of this clause is, that all such as will not yield to the gospel, after matters once come in question, and the light thereof breaketh forth, but continue still in their blindness and hardness, standing out sturdily against the truth, shall feel the heavy judgment of God upon them, and shall come to a miserable and wretched end; as did here, in England, Stephen Gardiner, Bonner, and

many other such open persecutors, in other nations and countries, as the book of martyrs doth plentifully witness.

Last of all, it is said that *the rest were terrified, and gave glory to the God of heaven*: that is, the elect of God seeing these horrible judgments upon the persecutors of the gospel, and having their eyes opened through these contentions and broils about religion, should repent of their former idolatries, blindness, and ignorance, should yield to the truth, and give glory to the God of heaven, as at this day we see thousands do, God be thanked. We heard before, that when the Turkish armies slew the third part of mankind, that the rest repented not of their idolatry. But now, God be praised, many do repent every day, and turn from dumb idols to serve the living God. And therefore, although the times wherein we live be sinful and troublesome, yet they are golden times and days in comparison of former ages, wherein Antichrist did reign and rule over all. From this prediction we have every reason to conclude, that the gospel shall prevail more and more in all the kingdoms of Europe, even until the end of the world. For here we see it foretold and prophesied, that in the very last age of the world, and even as it were a little before the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which presently hereupon is sounded, as in the next verses appeareth, many should repent, and give glory to God.

The second woe is past ; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded : and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The king-

doms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. xi. 14, 15.

Now cometh the third, the last, and the greatest woe, which is the woe of eternal death upon all the ungodly, both in their souls and bodies, for ever in the last judgment. The second woe was the Turkish dominion. And this third woe is the last judgment. For it now followeth, that the seventh angel soundeth the last trumpet: as our Lord Jesus sware before, that when the seventh angel should sound the trumpet, there should be time no longer. Therefore when we see all things fulfilled which belong unto the sixth trumpet, it remaineth that we should every hour expect and look for the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the end of the world. For the Holy Ghost telleth us, that when the kingdom of the Pope and the Turk shall fall, and the gospel be preached in many nations and kingdoms, that then the third woe will come to pass; that is, the last judgment followeth speedily upon it. Now, at the sounding of this seventh trumpet, there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are our Lord's, and his Christ's, and he shall reign for evermore.

These voices in heaven are the voices of God's elect, who are celebrating the victory that is gained over Satan and Antichrist, and rejoicing that the kingdom of God and of Christ is set up, and shall stand for evermore. For now all adverse power being overthrown, Christ doth deliver up a peaceable kingdom to his Father, as it is written, *Then*

shall be the end, when he hath delivered up his peaceable kingdom to God the Father. For he must reign over the Church militant till he have trod down all his enemies under his feet; and when the Son of God hath subdued all things to himself, then shall he be subject to his Father, as he is mediator of the Church, and yet reign with his Church for evermore.

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and is to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned, Rev. xi. 16, 17.

These twenty-four elders signify all the elect, both of Jews and Gentiles, as we have before observed; which all, in the most suppliant manner, worship the only everlasting God, even in the Church triumphant, and greatly rejoice, and give all praise and glory unto him, because now he hath received the kingdom, the power, and the glory; both Pope, and Turk, and Emperor, and all his enemies, being subdued under his feet.

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give rewards unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth, Rev. xi. 18.

Here mention is made of the wrath and vengeance which is to be poured upon all the wicked at the last day, and also the reward of the godly. For

whereas he saith, *The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged*: the sense and meaning is, that all the profane enemies of the Church, which have had their time in which they were angry with God's people, and in their wrath did afflict and vex them to the utmost of their power, should now be judged and condemned in God's wrath: for now the day of his wrath and vengeance is come, wherein he will destroy them that destroyed the earth, and seemed to carry all before them; and where also he will give a full recompense to all his faithful worshippers, both small and great, both preachers and professors of his gospel.

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail, Rev. xi. 19.

This is a further representation of that which is set down in the former verse. For now he saith, that *the temple of God should be opened in heaven*: which is, that, through the merits and mediation of our blessed Redeemer, a passage should be made for all the elect to enter into God's everlasting kingdom, and reign with him and his angels for evermore. By *the ark of his testament*, is meant Christ, who is said here to be seen in the temple, or kingdom of glory; because through his mediation only (in whom the covenant of peace is established with his Church,) the twenty-four elders are made partakers of their crowns, and enter in with him and his angels into the everlasting temple made without hands,

and eternal in the heavens. But, on the contrary, here it is said, that *there were lightnings, thunderings, &c.*; that is, most terrible vengeance and wrath poured down upon all who reject the gospel. For when it shall be said to all the faithful, *Come, ye blessed, &c.* then also shall it be said unto all unbelievers, *Go, ye cursed, into hell-fire, &c.*

Now for the proof of this exposition of the last verse, that the temple in heaven is to be understood of the kingdom of glory, look in chap. xvi. 5, 6, 8; chap. xvi. 1. The reason hereof is, that as the doors of the temple of Jerusalem being set open, God's people entered in and worshipped: so the everlasting gates of the new Jerusalem, and celestial temple being set open by Christ, all the elect enter therein, and worship God without weariness, even as the angels, for evermore.

That the ark of the covenant is taken for Christ, see 2 Sam. vi. 2. Psal. lxxviii. 61, 62. This ark of the covenant, that is, Christ is here seen in the temple, because Christ hath already taken possession of heaven, as Mediator and Head of the Church, and now doth set open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, that through him they may have free access thereunto; as it is written, *that through him only we have an entrance unto the Father.*

That by *thunderings, lightnings, earthquakes, and hail*, is meant that dreadful vengeance and wrath which is poured forth upon all the ungodly, see Psal. xi. 6.

Let this briefly suffice to satisfy the conscience of the reader. And thus much concerning the second

vision contained in these eight chapters : wherein we have heard all things expounded that do belong unto the opening of the seven seals, and the sounding of the seven trumpets ; that is, all notable things which were to fall out from the apostles' time unto the end of the whole world.

CHAP. XII.

WE are now to treat of the third vision, which forms the subject of all the remaining chapters of this book. Wherein many things which were obscurely and darkly mentioned in the former vision, are more plainly and fully opened and expounded : so that this third vision is, as it were, a commentary or more clear exposition of sundry things contained in the second vision ; but especially of the persecuting Roman empire mentioned in the opening of the second seal, and also of the Papacy mentioned at the sounding of the first trumpet. But the general sum of this third vision, is a lively painting of the malignant Church, and the great upholders thereof, the Devil, the Roman Emperor, and the Pope. It sheweth also the rising and falling of the Roman empire, and the rising and falling of the Papacy. It sheweth likewise the utter overthrow of both together, with the eternal condemnation of the Devil, which set them all to fight against the Church. Last of all, it sheweth the eternal felicity of the

Church, and the inconceivable happiness of all God's chosen people in the heavens for evermore.

The principal drift of this twelfth chapter, is to set forth the nature of the true, visible, and militant Church here on earth, whose head is Christ Jesus; and also the false malignant Church, whose head is the Devil; together with the continual enmity and war which is always betwixt them.

This chapter may be divided into five parts, viz.

First, a description of the Church.

Secondly, a description of the Devil, the Church's enemy.

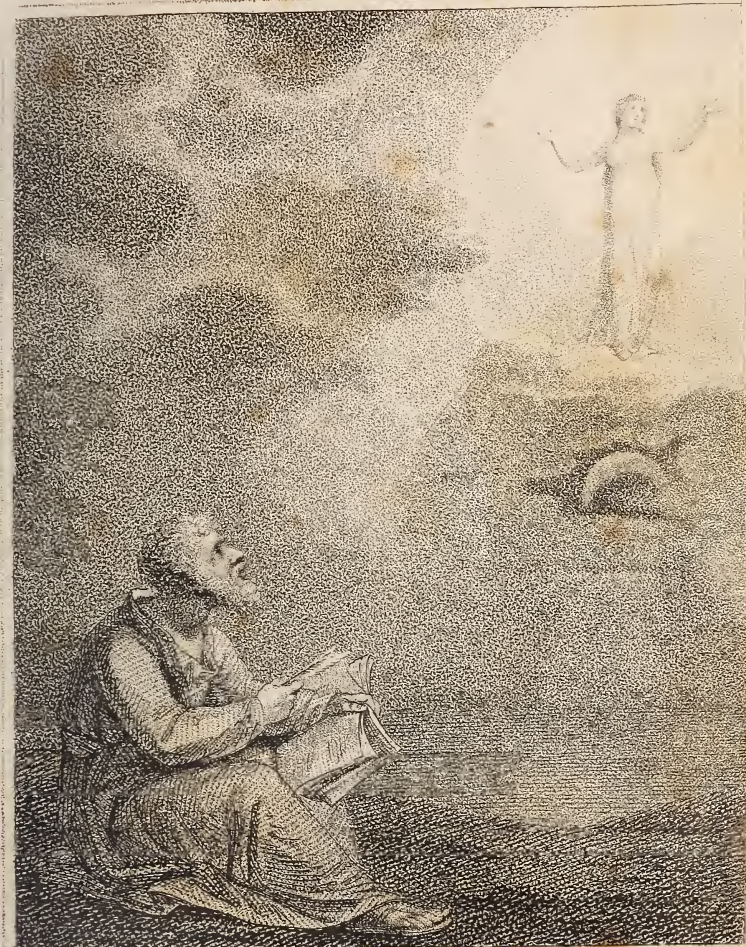
Thirdly, the Church's battle with the Devil, and her victory over him.

Fourthly, the joy and triumphs of the godly, in consequence of the victory gained by the Church over the power of Satan.

Fifthly, the fury and malice of Satan; who, although he was foiled in battle by the Church, yet would not relinquish his opposition, but continued persecuting the Church in her members, and making war against all those who trusted in the gospel.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, Rev. xii. 1.

The Holy Ghost calleth the matters of this chapter *a great wonder*, to engage our attention. For men are much moved with wonders; and a wonder indeed it is, in the literal sense, to see a woman clothed with the sun, &c. but a far greater wonder, in the spiritual sense, as we shall hear, and the



And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

Rev. Ch. 12. V. 1.



greatest wonder of all, that a poor weak woman should encounter with a great red dragon, and overcome him. It is said to *be a wonder in heaven*, because the Church here, in vision, appeareth not upon the earth, but in heaven, inasmuch as her birth is from heaven, her inheritance in heaven, and her conversation in heaven.

The Church is here compared to a woman, as in the 45th Psalm, and the whole book of the Canticle, and that for three reasons.

First, as a woman is weak and feeble, and in law can do nothing of herself without her husband, so we of ourselves are weak and feeble, and in matters of God's law and worship can do nothing without our husband, Christ; as he saith, *Without me ye can do nothing*.

Secondly, because the Church, through the preaching of the word, doth produce and nourish up many children unto God.

Thirdly, as the love and affection of a woman is to her husband (Genesis iii. 16.), so the love and affection of the Church is altogether to Christ, and Christ to her.

This woman is clothed with the sun; that is, the Church is clothed with Christ, the *Sun of Righteousness*, as the prophet Malachi speaketh, chap. iv. 2.

The moon was under her feet: whereby it signifieth that the Church treadeth under her feet all worldly things, which are compared to the moon for their frequent changes, waxings, wanings, and increasings, decreasings, and continual mutations, and so

certainties. The Church treadeth all transitory things under her feet; that is, she maketh light account of them; she regardeth them not in comparison of heavenly things. For he that is clothed with the sun, careth little for the light of the moon.

She hath upon her head a crown of twelve stars: which signifieth, that the Church is adorned and beautified with the doctrine of the twelve apostles; that is, the doctrine of the gospel, as it were with a crown of gold, of pearls, and precious stones. For the doctrine of the gospel is the crown of the Church.

And she being with child, cried travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered, Rev. xii. 2.

This alludes to the state of the Church after it had received the word of everlasting life, by the ministry of the gospel: as the apostle saith, *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.* And to the Galatians, *O ye little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you.*

It is not only said that this woman was with child, but also that she was near her time of delivery, and that she crieth in travail. Now the child which she bringeth forth, is Christ Jesus, as appeareth in the fifth verse; for there it is said of him, that *he should rule over all nations with a rod of iron,* Rev. xii. 5.

Now, although Christ was born but of one member of the Church, which is the Virgin Mary; yet we are equally certain, that the whole Church, which was before his coming, did even travail with pain to bring him forth, because they had, through faith

in the prophecies and promises relative to that great and glorious event, a longing and frequent desire and expectation of his coming. For from the first promise made to Adam, and afterwards renewed to Abraham and his posterity, the Church stood in continual expectation of the promised Messiah, and waited with the utmost anxiety the day when he should be actually exhibited to the world. For which cause she is here said to *cry travailing in birth*. And not unsuitably also may the Church be said to cry travailing in birth, when through many persecutions and afflictions she bringeth forth children unto God by the ministry of the word. For the Church bringeth forth no children with ease, having so few friends to help her, and so many enemies against her, as presently we shall hear.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven ; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth : and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born, Rev. xii. 3, 4.

This is a description of the great and formidable enemy of the Church, the Devil : who, because he studieth and laboureth continually to impede the good estate of the Church in heavenly things, to reduce her dignity, and dispossess her of her inheritance : therefore here, in a vision, he is said to appear in heaven. For he interferes with the Church in and about heavenly things, using his utmost

power to degrade her from the glorious station which she now occupies, to a similar state of hopeless condemnation with himself, if it were possible. The Devil is compared to a dragon, for his fury and rage; to a great dragon, for his power and might; and a *red dragon*, for his blood-thirsty cruelty, malice, and madness against Jesus Christ and all his members.

His *seven heads* signify his manifold arts and subtilities, by which he seduces mankind.

His *ten horns* signify his dreadful power. For who knoweth not that he is stronger than any other creature; having not lost his strength by his fall, but remaineth as strong as an angel of light.

His *seven crowns upon his heads*, signify his numerous victories over the world. For he hath from time to time, and from age to age, gained so many conquests in the world, through his cunning and power, that now *he is the god of the world*, as the apostle saith, *and reigneth as king over them*.

This dragon hath an enormous tail, both for length and strength: for it is so long, that it reacheth up to heaven; and so strong, that it removeth the stars from thence. That is, the Devil, through ambition and covetousness, and other fleshly lusts, doth pull down many ministers, which shined both in their doctrines and their lives, as the stars of heaven, but by relaxing in their duty as ministers of the gospel, they have lost their brightness and glory.

Moreover it is said, that *the dragon stood before*

the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. Wherein we are to observe the fury and malice of Satan, and see how narrowly he watched the birth of our ever-blessed Saviour, in order that he might immediately destroy him. And for this cause, he stirred up Herod, the king, subtilly to seek him out by the wise men, that he might kill him: and afterward most cruelly practised the same, by murdering so many innocents. But this is always a general truth, that Satan seeketh to smother not only Christ, but every member of his in the cradle; yea, to blast them in the bud before ever they come to fruit or flower.

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne, Rev. xi. 5.

Notwithstanding the malice and watchfulness of Satan, yet the Church bringeth forth Christ, which should rule, and over-rule all nations with a rod of iron; that is, the sceptre of his word, as it is in the second Psalm; and with the rod of his mouth, as the prophet speaketh.

Moreover it is said, that *this child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.* That is, Christ, by his resurrection, did take possession of his chair of state, in despite of Herod, Pontius Pilate, the priests, the pharisees, and all other his enemies, which sought to keep him down: and now, being ~~ascended into~~ heaven, doth draw all his members unto him, in despite of the Devil and his advocates.

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she
No. 7. Y

hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Rev. xii. 6.

Now after the woman's child was placed in safety, here is shewed what became of the woman herself: to wit, that she was so closely pursued by the scribes and pharisees, and by the priests and elders, that she was compelled to fly into the wilderness. The natural sense and meaning of this is, that when the Church began to grow, after Christ's ascension, and the number of the disciples to increase exceedingly, as we read in the second of the Acts, Satan did oppress it with such violence and malignity, that he would have destroyed them all, and rooted them out at once, that so the woman might have no more being in the earth. And therefore we read, in the eighth of Acts, that after the stoning of Stephen there was such a persecution raised up against the Church by the high priests, the princes of the Jews, and the pharisees, that all the apostles and disciples of Christ were scattered and dispersed into the heathen countries, and among the heathen people, which here is called *the wilderness*; that is to say, a ground untilled, desolate, and barren of all fruits of godliness.

But now some may say, how shall the Church do in the wilderness? how shall she live? how shall she be sustained? There is no tilling, no sowing, no planting; there groweth no corn; there is nothing to be had either for food or raiment. Here it is answered, that God prepared a place for her where she should be fed. She wanted neither food nor

raiment in her persecutions and troubles. Which teacheth, that God doth always provide for his own even in great miseries, scarcities, famines, banishments, and persecutions: as sometimes he did for Elias in the time of dearth, and for the children of Israel in the wilderness.

The time wherein the Church was fed in the wilderness was *a thousand two hundred and threescore days*; that is, during the time of her persecutions, as before hath been shewed, chap. xi. 2.

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven, Rev. xii. 7, 8.

Now we are come to the third part of this chapter, which is the contest betwixt Christ and the Devil. For whereas the dragon could not destroy Christ in the cradle, as he endeavoured, and so deprive the Church of all her happiness for ever, now he proclaimeth open war, both against Christ and all his members, plotting and purposing to oppose the very salvation of the Church, though it be founded in Christ. Wherein he sheweth both his impudence and furious madness.

Michael here signifieth Christ, as Daniel, chap. x. 13. This name is given to Christ, in Daniel, because he is the first of the chief princes, that is, he is the head of the angels, who are chief princes, as the apostle affirmeth.

That Christ hath his angels joined with him, is not to note any weakness or want of strength in Christ, alone to overcome his enemies; but to shew,

that as Christ effecteth great wonders in the world, so, for the most part, he doth it by instruments and means ; as sometimes angels, sometimes men. But here, specially it meaneth the apostles and their successors : yea, and at this day all Christian kings, princes, and potentates of the earth, and all others which take part with Christ against the Devil and his instruments.

Well, here we see that these two generals, and captains, Michael and the dragon, do muster both their armies, join battle, and fight a pitched field ; the event and success whereof is this, that the dragon and his angels were driven from heaven. O blessed success ! may we say : for if the Devil had prevailed, it had been woe to us ; since this battle was about and concerning the very salvation of mankind, by Christ's death and resurrection. We know how the Devil set upon Christ alone, to tempt unto sin, that so he might overthrow the work of our redemption ; supposing in this combat to have got the day : but he prevailed not. Afterward, how strongly did he oppose him, by his angels ? I mean the scribes and pharisees, the high priests and elders of the people ; not only in murdering and crucifying his natural body, but also in using all forcible and cunning means to keep him, that he might never rise up again : as the great stone upon his tomb, the sealing of it, and the watch set to keep it. For the Devil knew right well, that if Christ rose again, he should be defeated in all his future attempts. For the resurrection of Christ is our actual justification, *And Christ was mightily declared to be the Son of*

God, by his resurrection from the dead. Well, do the dragon and his angels what they can, yet Christ is risen again, and hath spoiled principalities and powers; yea, all the infernal army, and hath made a shew of them openly, and hath led them all in triumph upon his cross. So that we see in this first and greatest battle, the Devil hath been completely foiled.

And it is further said, *that this Devil and all his angels were cast out of heaven, and their place was no more found*: which is not to be understood of their first casting out of heaven, immediately after their creation. For at that time they were no devils, nor enemies to the Church, but angels of light: but now, since their fall, and since they were Devils, they are said to be cast out of heaven, not because they ever came into heaven since they were Devils, but because they can no longer impeach the Church touching her blessed estate in heaven. They are left without hope of dispossessing her of her inheritance; for that is ratified, and made sure unto her in the death and resurrection of Christ. And for this cause it is said, that the Devil hath no more to do in heaven: that is, he cannot overthrow the salvation of God's children. *For who can lay any thing to the charge of God's chosen? It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn? It is Christ which is dead, yea, or rather which is risen again, &c.*

True it is indeed that this battle is said to be in heaven; that is, about heavenly things, yea, about the highest points of heaven, which is salvation, or damnation. For the Devil, upon this very point,

hath from the beginning mightily wrestled and struggled with the Church, and doth even until this day: but blessed be God, that he cannot, nor shall not prevail against any one of God's elect. For our Lord Jesus saith, *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any take them out of my hand: my Father, which gave them me, is greater than all. Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* Again, *All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me. And this is the Father's will which sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

Now further we are to observe, that as Christ, in his own person, hath once prevailed in the main battle against the Devil, so his Church militant shall likewise always prevail through him. For it is written, *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him, Rev. xii. 9.

Now because the Devil cannot overthrow the salvation of God's elect, he is said to *be cast out of heaven into the earth*: that is, among earthly and carnal men, that he may exercise his tyranny, and wreak his malice upon them. For he hath power give him to tyrannize over them at his pleasure: and the apostle saith, *He worketh in the children of disobedience, and taketh them captive to do his will.*

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our

God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night, Rev. xii. 10.

Here is the triumphant song of victory, which all the saints and angels sing unto God; praising and magnifying his power, and the power of his Son, Christ, for overcoming the dragon, and giving the victory to the Church, through Christ. For now, with great joy and loud voices, they sing and say, that the Church's salvation is sealed and made sure unto her for ever. It never can be shaken. The Devil is foiled, and cast down into the earth.

These songs of joy, after great victories, are of great antiquity in the Church: as we read of the children of Israel, after the overthrow of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea; of Deborah, after the great victory over Sisera; of the women that sung after the victory over Goliath by David.

The Devil is called the accuser of the brethren for two causes. First, because he accuseth God's elect of much sin, and calleth for justice against them day and night at God's hands, that they might be condemned upon such articles as he is able to prove against them: for he knowing right well that the Judge of all the world is a just God, and must needs deal uprightly, doth daily urge him to do justice unto sinners, being willingly ignorant that all God's people, though sinners, are cleared and discharged in Christ.

Another reason is, because of the calumnies, reproaches, and slanders, which in all ages, at all times, and in all places and countries, he hath al-

ways unjustly raised up against the true worshippers of God.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death, Rev. xii. 11.

Here is shewed, that the victory of the Church over Satan and hell, is not through any power or might of her own, but *by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of the testimony*; that is, the word of God, which they witness, profess, love, and abide by even unto death.

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time, Rev. xii. 12.

Here again the saints and angels, and all the blessed company of heaven, are called upon, and exhorted to rejoice, because the Devil and his angels are cast out, and the elect have the victory over him through the blood of the Lamb; and because the salvation of the Church is sealed up, and God only reigned through Christ. Which all are matters of so great moment, that not only the Church militant is stirred up to rejoice herein, but even the Church triumphant also, that is, the spirits of just and perfect men. But on the contrary, here is fearful woe denounced against *the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea*; that is, all papists, atheists, worldlings, and reprobates. For since he cannot have his will of the Church, yet he will wreak his

malice upon them, and binding their eyes, and making them his slaves and vassals, to fight for his kingdom against Christ, against his Church, against all goodness, and all good men. Therefore a reason is given why the Devil is in such a rage with the Church, and cometh upon them in great wrath and fury; which is, because *he hath but a short time*: that is, because his kingdom draweth to an end, therefore he doth bestir himself.

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child, Rev. xii. 13.

Now the Devil seeing himself cast out of heaven, so as he cannot impeach the salvation of the Church, he raiseth up dreadful persecutions against her by his instruments here in the earth, labouring to root her out if it were possible: for being overcome by the head of the Church, he doth now with all his power set upon the body; and what opposition he hath in all ages, especially in these last days, raised up, and daily doth raise up against the true doctrine of Christ, both the Scriptures and all Church histories do abundantly declare.

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent, Rev. xii. 14.

These two wings signify all the ways and means of escape which God gave to his Church, when he delivered her from the hands of her pursuers and her persecutors: and also her swift flight from

them, and all their malicious practices. For although the Church cannot absolutely fly from the presence of the Devil, with her eagle's wings, being so unspeakably swift as he is ; yet, speaking figuratively, she is said to fly from him and his presence, when the power of the tyrants and persecutors which he raised up cannot overtake her to murder and kill her. But, as touching her flight to the wilderness, and her lodging and nourishment there, by God's providence, in the midst of all penury and extremity, we have sufficiently heard before in the sixth verse, and therefore it is not necessary to say any thing further of it here. As concerning the space and continuance of her nourishment in the wilderness, which is here said to be *a time, and times, and half a time*, it is the same as the thousand two hundred and threescore days, mentioned in the sixth verse ; and the twenty-four months, mentioned in chap. xi. 2 ; and the three days and a half, mentioned chap. xi. 6, as before hath been shewed.

And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood, Rev. xii. 15.

Now the Church being secretly hid, and nourished by God's providence in the wilderness, so as the Devil and his instruments cannot find her out, nor come at her, he taketh another course, and casteth about another way to annoy her ; and that is, by casting a flood of water after her to drown her withal. Whereby is meant, the innumerable lies, reproaches, and slanders which he raised up by

sundry heretics against her, in all ages; as the Arians, Donatists, Papists, and such like, and all to bring her into the hatred of princes, potentates, and all that were in love with her: that since otherwise he could not prevail against her, yet at least he might utterly sink her in this gulf of reproaches.

And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth, Rev. xii. 16.

The same God which first delivered the Church from the violence and fury of Satan, and afterwards cast him out of heaven, and gave her the victory over him; and after that again miraculously hid her, and preserved her in the wilderness, doth not now in her extremity forsake her, nor suffer her to be drowned in this flood of reproaches, and unjust calumnies, which the dragon cast up after her; but causeth the *earth to help her, and to swallow up the flood*: that is, he useth all creatures in the earth to help his Church; and not only so, but also he stirreth up many earthly and carnal men to defend the Church, and to take part with her against her enemies. As sometimes he did Cyrus, Abimelech, Nabuzaradan, Gamaliel, and sundry others, whose power and policy he used for the good of his Church, and for the drying up of that flood of reproaches which Satan hath, in all ages, cast up against her. And, God be thanked, we see at this day that this flood of slanders and calumnies which Papists and Atheists cast out against the Church and her particular members, do dry up daily, and shall dry up more and more, being drunk in by the earth. And the Church

doth still stand unmoveable, and shall stand and continue even unto the end of the world.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, Rev. xii. 17.

Here we see there is no end of the Devil's malice. He is indefatigable in mischief: though he has been foiled so many times, yet he will never give over, but begin again. For whereas he could not prevail against the woman to cast her out of heaven, by impeaching her election and salvation in Christ; nor yet root her out of the earth by persecutions, being hid in the wilderness, and protected by God's providence, as young Joash was preserved in the priest's chamber from the fury of Athalia: now he goeth another way to work, and setteth upon her in her posterity, which remain in the earth unto this day. So that now, since he cannot do what mischief he would against the Church, yet will he do what he can: seeing he cannot wound her in her head, yet will he bite, and pinch at her heel; as it is written, that *he should bruise her heel*. And as it is the malice of Satan against the Church, so is the rage and fury of all his members, even all the wicked and ungodly, against the true worshippers of God. They are restless in malice and in mischief: if they cannot do what they would, yet will they do what they can: they will never give over: if they can injure them in the least thing that is, they shall be sure of it.

CHAP. XIII.

WE have heard in the former chapter the description of the Church, and of her arch-enemy the Devil, and of the battle betwixt them, with the success thereof. Now in this chapter we are to hear of the dragon's two great instruments, whereby he fighteth against the woman; that is, the Roman empire, and the Papacy. For by these two, as it were his two hands, he hath in all ages, from the apostles' time to this day, most cruelly assailed and afflicted the Church. Therefore the main drift of this chapter, is to describe at large these two beasts, together with their proceedings. So that this chapter may fitly be divided into two principal parts.

The first is a description of the Roman monarchy, when it was in the heighth of its glory, until the eleventh verse.

The second is a description of the Papacy, when it was in its greatest pride and exaltation, in all the verses following unto the end of this chapter.

In the first of these two main branches the Roman empire is described.

First, of the pedigree thereof.

Secondly, of her seven several governments.

Thirdly, of her great and overwhelming power.

Fourthly, of her victories.

Fifthly, of her blasphemies.

Sixthly, of her fury, rapine, and pride.

After this is set down the wound which was made in the empire, with the curing of the same.

Lastly, is set down the great and admirable power and authority of the Roman empire, which ruled over a great part of the world, and had many nations subject unto it, especially when the Popes were the heads thereof.

In the second part is the papacy very lively described.

First, from the pedigree thereof, which is of the earth.

Secondly, from the civil and ecclesiastical power thereof, which is pretended to come from Christ, although in truth it is of the Devil.

After this is set down that the papacy should be as mighty, and perform as much in the service of the dragon, against God, as ever the empire of the heathen could do, both by authority and force, and especially by lying wonders.

Then it is shewed, that as the papacy did in substance of matter set up and restore again the old Roman tyranny to be worshipped and wondered at, so hath it framed an hierarchy or ecclesiastical government, after the very form and precedent of the ancient Roman tyranny; which is indeed so like it, that it is called the lively image thereof. And he hath, by his clergy and their jurisdiction, put such life and spirit into this image, that it spake with authority and power in all countries and kingdoms; insomuch, that whosoever would not submit himself thereunto, and both profess and practise Popery, and yield himself wholly to the papacy, he should die for it.

Last of all is described, and discovered from the

numerative letters of the name of the second beast, both who he was, and from whence he should spring.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy, Rev. xiii. 1.

John affirmeth that he stood upon the sand of the sea, to behold the beast which riseth out of the sea; or else, because the Greek word may be of the third person, which is, he stood; that is, the dragon stood; it may bear this sense, that the Devil stood upon the sea sand, working and framing out of the sea his chief instrument, which is the beast now following to be spoken of.

First, we are to understand that a beast in the scripture doth signify a kingdom, or monarchy; and that not in respect of the civil power thereof, which is of God, as it is written, *There is no power but of God*: but in respect of the tyranny, cruelty, ambition, pride, and other such like oppressive qualities, which are of the Devil; and therefore this beast is said to ascend out of the bottomless pit, chap. xvii. 8.

This word beast is thus taken in the seventh of Daniel, where the three great monarchies of the Babylonians, Medes, and Persians, and of the Grecians, are compared for their pride, rapine, and cruelty, to a lion, a bear, and a leopard. The angel, in that chapter, saith expressly, that these beasts were kings, that is, kingly governments or dominions.

By the beast, in this place, is meant the Roman monarchy ; not in regard of the civil power thereof, but especially in respect of the tyranny of it in oppressing the Church.

By the sea here, is meant the troublesome state of the nations, as it is taken in chap. iv. 6. and chap. xxi. 1. For, from the troubled and unsettled state of the former kingdoms, and heathen nations, which were as a raging sea, did the Roman empire spring up, as all histories do witness. And the prophet Daniel doth plainly teach, that through the division of the Greek empire, which fell out in the posterity of Alexander the Great, especially betwixt his two sons, Ptolomeus and Seleucus, the Roman monarchy by degrees made a head, till at last it came to this pitch which now we shall hear of.

By the seven heads of this beast, are meant the seven several governments of the Roman empire. First, by kings ; secondly, by consuls ; thirdly, the decemviri ; fourthly, by dictators ; fifthly, by triumviri ; sixthly, by emperors ; and, lastly, by Popes, as hereafter shall more plainly appear.

By the ten horns of this beast, is meant the great power and large dominion of the Roman empire ; or, as the angel himself doth expound it, thereby is meant ten kings, that is, many kingdoms, which should be subject to the Roman monarchy, and wherein in very deed the power and strength of the empire did consist. For by these horns the Roman empire did not only push down other nations, but did especially oppress the Church, and cruelly wound and persecute it.

Now then we see that the Roman emperors, both in horns and heads, were like their father, the Devil or the dragon.

By the ten crowns upon his ten horns, are meant his great and manifold victories over other countries.

The horns of the beast are said to be crowned, and not his heads; because the Roman empire hath always more prevailed by power than by policy.

But the dragon hath his heads crowned, and not his horns, because he hath always done mischief by policy.

One thing in all this is greatly to be heeded, that the Holy Ghost, in this chapter, doth specially speak of the Roman monarchy, as the Popes were heads thereof; or, as it was under the dominion of the Popes in their pride, when the emperors were almost trodden under foot; and not simply and solely, as the emperors were heads thereof.

Moreover it is said, that *upon the seven heads of this beast was written the name of blasphemy*. For, besides the blasphemies of Caligula, Nero, Domitian, Dioclesian, Julianus, and other heathenish and persecuting emperors, who have arrogated unto themselves divine honours, we shall hear of the surpassing blasphemies of the Popes against God.

And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority, Rev. xiii. 2.

Here the Roman empire is described of the likelihood of qualities, which it had with the other three empires going before it. For, first, it is compared to

a leopard, for swiftness to prey upon others; and also for fierceness and subtilty, as did the Greek monarchy. Secondly, it is compared to a bear, for rapine and ravening, as the monarchy of the Medes and Persians. Thirdly, it is compared to a lion, for pride and insolence, as the monarchy of the Chaldeans. So then, by this description, it is very clear that this beast signifieth the Roman monarchy, because it containeth in it the whole power of the other three empires; and is here described as a compound of divers beasts, yea, as a very monster of monsters, having the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion.

Moreover it is said, *that the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.* Which plainly sheweth, that the power and authority of the Roman empire is of the Devil, in respect of the evil quality thereof; that is, fraud, rapine, and oppression. In which respect it is said to ascend out of the bottomless pit, as was declared before. But the substance of it, and the government itself, was of God. *For the powers that be, are ordained of God,* as saith the apostle.

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast, Rev. xiii. 3.

John, in a vision, seeth one of the seven heads of the beast almost wounded unto death. There are many opinions of the learned touching this wound of the empire, both when it should be, and how, and by whom it should be given. Some understand it of the death of Julius Cæsar, some of Nero, some

of the oppression of the Goths and Vandals, some of the great prevailing of John Husse, and Jerome of Prague, in the greatest part of Bohemia. But to let all these pass, if we do wisely consider and weigh with ourselves, that by a beast, in this place, is not meant any lawful administration of government, but a tyrannical power in persecuting the Church, we shall find that a head of the beast was then wounded, when Constantine the Great slew Maxentius and Licinius, the two last persecuting emperors, set up true religion, and brought peace to the Churches. For hereby the Roman empire was greatly wounded, as far as regarded the tyranny of it. The Holy Ghost doth not mention which of the seven heads were thus wounded, but in general saith, one of them. Now it is very probable that he meaneth the sixth head; for we do not read of any such wound in the former five which were past. Neither can it be understood of the seventh head, which was the papacy, because it received no such wound as yet. It followeth then, *that the wound was in the sixth head*; that is, in the empire. But we read of no emperor that did so wound the beast, as did Constantine the Great. And therefore it is very probable that the Holy Ghost here pointed at him.

But it followeth, that his deadly wound was healed; to wit, by these wicked emperors which succeeded Constantine, as Constantius, Julianus, Valentius, and others, which afresh did set up idolatry, and persecuted the Church. Now, upon the healing of this wound, it is said, that all the world wondered, and followed the beast; that is,

many nations, or the greatest part of the world, did submit themselves to the Roman tyranny. For sure it is, some kingdoms were never subject to the empire of Rome, as, for example, some part of Asia, and some part of Africa.

And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him, Rev. xiii. 4.

Now is shewed how all the subjects of the Roman empire did worship the dragon; that is, they maintained that worship which he liked and loved; that is, the worship of idols, which the apostle calleth *the worship of Devils*. And it is said also, *they worshipped the beast*; that is, they did all with one accord submit themselves both to the religion and authority of the beast: that is, to the Popes, as they were the seventh head of the empire. For, as I said before, so I say again, the Holy Ghost here speaketh of the empire, when it was in the greatest glory and exaltation; yea, when all world the wondered, and followed the beast; yea, when all admired the great and large dominion of the Roman empire, and said within themselves, *Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?*

Now the empire of Rome was never so great and powerful as when the Popes were heads thereof; I mean, when they executed the whole civil jurisdiction of the empire, besides their ecclesiastical power, which now did both meet in one. For now the papacy was aloft, and the Roman empire joined with it; so that the eyes of the world were dazzled

with the pomp and magnificence thereof, and they said, What is like unto it? or, who is comparable to the Pope, the seventh head thereof? For when the blind world thought that the power of the Pope was not only above all things in this world, but also did reach even unto heaven and hell. For they imagined that the Pope might carry to heaven whom he pleased; and whom he would he might cast down to hell: and therefore who could war with the beast? And thus we see the reason of their astonishment, and of their speech. All histories, and experience itself doth shew, that there was never any power in the world so wondered at as the usurped power and majesty of the Pope, after he came to be the head of the Roman monarchy. For then the world supposed that he had power even as God; and that he might depose and set up kings and emperors at his pleasure. Then it is clear, that under the dominion of the Popes, Rome hath been in her highest exaltation and glory. For the papacy was the seventh head of the beast; whereby the whore of Babylon was supported in her most magnificent pomp and pride.

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, Rev. xiii. 5, 6.

Here are mentioned the proud and blasphemous speeches both of the old and new Roman empire, and of the old and new Roman emperors. For this

beast, as I said before, comprehendeth all the Roman empire, both under the heathen emperors and the popes. Touching the great things, and the blasphemies which the old persecuting emperors have uttered against the God of heaven, it would require a volume to set them down in particulars. I will therefore only mention two or three for example sake: first, that of Caius Caligula, who would have his image set up in temples to be worshipped as God, and that the people should swear by his name. Nero also did openly blaspheme the name of Christ, and required divine honour to be given unto himself. Domitian commanded that he should be called God and Lord. Many others required the like things: and so all the world wondered and worshipped this blasphemous beast.

Now as the sixth head, which was the old empire of Rome, was full of the names of blasphemy; so the seventh head, which is the new empire under the Popes, which he here chiefly speaketh of, did most of all blaspheme. For the Pope did challenge unto himself all power, both in heaven and earth: he would be worshipped as God; he usurped authority over the word of God; he did take upon him to forgive sins. He did most blasphemously encroach upon all the offices of Christ, as king, priest, and prophet. He hath commanded the angels. He hath erected blasphemous images, and caused pictures to be made of the Godhead. He boasteth and vaunteth great things of his papal power, of Peter's keys, of Peter's chair, of Peter's succession; of his miracles, of his two swords, and of his manifold

royal prerogatives. Some of them counted the religion of Christ a tale, or fable ; some drank to the Devil ; some said they could do as much as God. It were infinite to set down all their blasphemies : for it is said of the whore of Babylon, that *she was full of the names of blasphemy*. Let this suffice for the understanding of this text, that as the old heathenish emperors did blaspheme, so the Popes (being heads of the empire,) did most of all blaspheme. And, as it is here said, they did not only blaspheme the name of God, but also did open their black and blasphemous mouths against *his tabernacle* ; that is, his Church ; calling it a company of heretics, schismatics, apostates, and such like ; *and also against them that dwell in heaven* ; that is, the spirits of just and perfect men, which are in heaven, as Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and such like.

Moreover it is to be noted, that this mouth was given unto this monstrous beast thus to blaspheme, and speak great things. But this is to be understood, that it was given in the wrath and just judgment of God upon the world, to plague them withal, because they regarded not the knowledge of the truth. But it is added, that this power of the beast thus to work his actions was limited unto forty-two months : so that although he rule and rage for a time, yet shall he not long continue.

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them : and power was given unto him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him,

whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii. 7, 8.

These two verses set forth the great power which was given to this beast, both in fighting against God's people, and also overcoming of them, and murdering of them by heaps. As we read of thousands murdered in the first ten persecutions, and ten thousands by the Popes, since they came to exercise the civil authority and jurisdiction of the Roman empire, and that in all countries and kingdoms of Europe; as it is here said, that *power was given unto him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.* And it is added, that *all that dwell upon the earth*, that is, all the subjects of the Roman monarchy, shall worship the beast, and make a God of him; as we read they have done. And the chief motive thereof, was his blasphemous mouth boasting and threatening great things if any did withstand him; and also his mighty power and authority, whereby he bore down all before him. For if any one spake against him, he was sure to suffer for it. And thus, through his tyrannical power, he subdued all nations under him, and made them stoop, and fall down and worship him. But it followeth, that for all this none of God's elect did worship him, or submit themselves to his religion and authority, but only those that *dwell upon the earth*; that is, earthly men; as papists, atheists, and reprobates, and all such *whose names are not written in the book of life.* Christ is called the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world; be-

cause the saving power of his death was from the beginning of all believe although he was not actually exhibited until the fulness of time.

If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints, Rev. xiii. 9, 10.

Here is shewed, that the things spoken of this great beast are very secret and mystical, and can be understood of none but those only whose ears and eyes God openeth to hear and see, and understand; that is, the very elect of God. As for all papists and worldlings, their ears and eyes are sealed and shut up, they cannot understand them; but do still worship the beast, ascribing unto him Divine power and honour.

In the tenth verse the judgment and vengeance of God is denounced against the Roman monarchy, both former and latter; which, as it hath long oppressed the Church with cruel bondage, and drawn thousands into perpetual captivity, so itself also should be cast down, with all the adherents thereof, both in this life and that which is to come. For as the Roman empire did tyrannize over the world, and led millions into spiritual captivity and bondage, so here it is declared, that, according to the strict law of justice, it likewise shall come to the same end. And as this beast had murdered many by the sword, so he himself must be murdered by the sword also; as the apostle saith, *God*
 No. 8. B b

is just, and will recompense tribulation to them that trouble his Church.

Now all this seemeth unto me to be a clear prophecy of the fall and final destruction of the Roman empire; which indeed, considering the height to which it had attained, may seem a thing strange and incredible; and therefore the Holy Ghost stirreth us up to attention in the ninth verse, as to a thing of great wonderment and admiration: for if the Roman monarchy fall, the papacy must of necessity fall with it. For the Roman empire is that beast which beareth up the whore of Babylon, as appeareth in the seventeenth chapter of this prophecy, where we shall (God willing,) plainly, and at large, hear of the joint destruction of them both together.

It is added, *Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.* That is, here is required great patience of all God's children, to wait and tarry till the performance and accomplishment of those things; and also faith and full assurance to believe, that they shall in God's appointed time come to pass. For few do believe these things, and therefore wait not with patience for the accomplishment thereof.

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon, Rev. xiii. 11.

Having described the first beast, which is the Roman empire; now the Holy Ghost cometh to describe the second beast, which is the Papacy, or the kingdom of the great Antichrist. For although

he be described before in regard of his monarchy, that is, the civil jurisdiction which he exercised, as he was the seventh head of the beast, and head of the empire; yet here he is described after another sort, that is, according to his ecclesiastical authority: and therefore he is called another beast, or a beast differing from the former, in that he exerciseth another power besides the power of the heathen emperors of Rome, which is his spiritual jurisdiction, in which respect he is called the false prophet.

The second beast riseth out of the earth, as the former rose out of the sea: thus it appeareth that Antichrist is a son of the earth; obscurely born, and by little and little creeping up out of his abject state, as did the Turk. It is here most truly said, that the kingdom of Antichrist ariseth out of the earth, and is the very offspring of the earth; for assuredly it never came from heaven. It had its beginning in covetousness, ambition, pride, murders, treasons, poisoning, sorceries, enchantments, and such like. For all histories do shew, that from these roots the papacy grew to its exceeding height and altitude.

This second beast hath *two horns like a lamb*: whereby is meant his civil and ecclesiastical power, or his kingdom and priesthood; which he falsely pretended to proceed from the Lamb, and therefore he beareth in his arms two keys, and hath two swords carried before him. So Boniface the eighth shewed himself one day in apparel as pope, and the next day in armour as emperor; of which the two

horns in the Pope's mitre are signs. But the Holy Ghost here telleth us, that these two horns are not the horns of the Lamb, but only like the horns of *a lamb*: for he received not his power from the Lamb Christ, but from the Devil; that is, the dragon with ten horns. Then thus it is, the papacy is the seventh head of the first beast, that is, the empire; and yet a beast by itself, with two horns like the Lamb, in respect of his joint power and authority, both ecclesiastical and civil, in which respect he is called even the eighth; and one of the seven, chap. xvii. 11.

Although this second *beast has two horns like a lamb, yet he spake as a dragon*; that is, all his words and works, practices and proceedings, laws and decrees, are for the dragon, from whom his power, and throne, and great authority do proceed. So that whatsoever he pretendeth in religion and matters of God's worship, as though he would be like the Lamb, yet assuredly he is altogether for the dragon and the Devil: he is assured unto them; as all experience doth manifestly witness.

And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. Rev. xiii. 12.

Here is shewed, that this second beast was as mighty and strong as the first beast; and could do as much as he, even in his presence. Whereby is shewn the great power and authority of the papacy, in performing as much in the service of the dragon, against God and his Church, as ever the empire of

the heathen and those wicked emperors could do; yea, he did much more against Christ, and his religion, than ever the persecuting emperors could do, even then when they were in the greatest power. And all this he did in his presence; that is, in the sight and open view of the whole empire, or the whole world.

And he causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, that is, all Papists and worldlings, to worship the first beast; that is, to receive the worship and religion of the old Roman tyranny, which set up and maintained idolatry. So then, although the power in the papacy came under the name of Christ, yet in truth it was the same with the power of the persecuting empire: for the heathen emperors condemned the true worship of God, and set up false worship, even the worship of Devils, which is idolatry; and so do the Popes also.

So then we see, that this second beast is all for the first beast; that is, he giveth up all his power and authority to set up the worship and religion of the old Roman tyrants; and to force all men, by cruel laws and decrees, to receive and embrace the same. So this second beast is no better than the first, but is, in truth, a great deal worse.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men; and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the

beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live,
Rev. xiii. 13, 14.

These two verses do contain two special things : the one thing is, the pretended miracles of Antichrist ; the other is the cursed effect of them.

As to the first, which is the wonders and miracles which Antichrist should work ; it is here said, that he should *make fire come down from heaven*, as Elias did. The meaning whereof is, not that the Popes could indeed cause the fire to come down from heaven, as Elias did ; but that, in the opinion of the blind world, they seemed to have as great power as Elias had. For, partly by counterfeit miracles, and partly by some strange things done by the power of Satan, the seduced world hath verily believed that the Pope and his clergy had as great power to work miracles as ever Elias had.

Touching the second thing, which is the effect of these wonders : it is here said, that the inhabitants of the earth, that is, Papists and worldlings, were grossly deceived and deluded by them, even by those lying wonders which he was permitted to do in the sight of the beast, that is, in the face and open view of the empire : according as the apostle foretold, that *the coming of Antichrist should be by the effectual working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and in all deceivableness of unrighteousness among them that perish, &c.* But, concerning the pretended miracles of Popery it is needless to write, their fallacy being so well known unto all men, and the accounts of them so common in all histories of those times.

Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live, Rev. xiii. 14.

Now Antichrist having gotten the world by his counterfeit miracles, doth lay his commandment on them to make an image to the beast. Now what is here meant by the image to the beast, is somewhat difficult to determine. Some think, that by the image of the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and did live, is meant the establishment, by the Popes, of the fallen Roman empire to its former greatness and power.

We read that the empire under Nero, Otho, Galba, and Vitellius, was weak and feeble in comparison with what it was before under Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. We read also, that the Goths and Vandals made horrible inroads in the Roman empire. We further read also, that the empire was divided and rent in pieces, so that there was the emperor of the east and the emperor of the west; and that at last the empire of the west was quite destroyed: so that for the space of 300 years and more there was no emperor of the west, till the bishop of Rome, Leo the Third, made Charles the Great, king of France, emperor. Then was the empire of the west again erected, and in time arrived to the possession of even greater power than it had enjoyed before under the dominion of the Popes. Now I say, that some do take this restoring of the decayed state of the empire, by the Popes, to its former strength and power, to be the *making of the image of the beast, which had the*

wound by a sword, and did live; but, for my own part, I cannot be of that opinion; and my reason is, that the restoration of the decayed estate of the empire to its former condition, was the setting up of the beast himself: for the empire is the beast, and not the image of the beast; for we must needs grant, that the beast and the image of the beast are two several things. But the Popes, in restoring the empire to its former state, set up the beast again: and therefore not the image of the beast. Therefore the image of the beast cannot be understood by the restoration of the decayed estate of the empire. Besides this, it is here said, that the inhabitants of the earth had a great hand in making this image. But the inhabitants of the earth did very little towards the re-establishment of the empire. For therein the Popes were all in all, after it came into their hands: therefore this cannot be understood of the empire, but of other things. Let us then diligently search what may be the true meaning of this passage. It must needs be allowed, that by the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live, is meant the empire in its recovered state, as mentioned in the twelfth verse. And by the image thereof, I understand the form of government: for an image doth signify a likeness, a similitude, a figure, or form of a thing. And as in all civil and ecclesiastical institutions there is both a substance and a form, a matter and a manner; so here, having before set down that Antichrist had erected the power of the Roman tyranny; now he sheweth that he would also set up the image and form of the

same. For before, in verse 12, it is said, that Antichrist, this second beast, caused the world to worship the first beast; that is, to receive and obey the laws, worship, and religion of the old heathenish Roman tyrants, as before has been stated: besides which, not content with making the inhabitants of the earth worship the old beast, in the substance of his religion, he layeth commandments upon them to make his image; that is, to erect an external form of ecclesiastical government, after the manner of the government of the old empire; yea, so like it, that it is called the very image of the same. For as the form of government, under the old emperors, was cruel and tyrannical, and altogether bent against the Church, so the form of the ecclesiastical government, under the Popes, was cruel and tyrannical, and altogether bent against the Church; and therefore here it is called the image of it, for it is exactly like it. Then it follows, that Antichrist hath set up that external form of worship which the idolatrous Romans of old used; and that he hath renewed the persecuting empire, not only in substance, but also in the form of government; and therefore I conclude, that the Popish Church-policy, and external government, is the very image of the beast.

Here the inhabitants of the earth are said to make the image of the beast, because they gave their consent to the making of it; for indeed the Popes themselves were the chief agents and actors in it.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak,

and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed, Rev. xiii. 15.

Here is shewed, that this image of the beast was not a dead image, but a living image; for Antichrist put a spirit into it, that is, life and power, and great authority; insomuch, that this image could speak, and not only speak, but speak with great authority and terror: so as whosoever would not worship this image, that is, submit himself to the Popish hierarchy, should be put to death. But perhaps some man may say, How did this image speak? I answer, by the Pope's clergy. For the Romish cardinals, abbots, monks, priests, and friars, were the very life and spirit of this image: they being the means by which the government was carried on, and the men to whom the execution of its laws was committed. For what was their outward form of government without this cruel execution, but as an image without life? But when Antichrist had once consecrated and erected his Romish priesthood, then did he put life into his image which before he had caused to be made and erected.

Thus we do plainly see, that the Popish hierarchy is not merely a resemblance of the old Roman policy, to stand as a picture on a wall, but hath a spirit put into it by the false prophet, and speaketh with such power and terror in all kingdoms, that it causeth all to be put to death who will not submit themselves unto it, and fall down and worship the beast. Who is ignorant, that as many as would not embrace Popery and the old Roman tyranny, were by the Popish clergy, their inquisitors, and

other officers, condemned in their courts as heretics or schismatics, and delivered them over, being condemned, to the secular power to be put to death.

And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save that he had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name, Rev. xiii. 16, 17.

Antichrist is not content to murder and massacre in all countries which will not worship the image of the beast, that is, submit to his government and authority; but will go yet a step further, and will have all people brought in bondage unto him as his acknowledged servants. For as men used to set a brand upon their sheep and other cattle, and to ear-mark them, that it might openly and manifestly appear to whom they appertain; so doth Antichrist, this Romish beast, cause all men in all kingdoms to carry in open view his mark or brand, whereby all may see that they belong unto him.

It is here said, that all the servants of Antichrist, of whatever degree, estate, or condition, must receive this mark in their right hand, or in their forehead; that is, they must openly confess and practise the worship and religion of the beast. For the forehead is put for the profession, and the right hand for the action: so that in one of them, at the least, every man must openly declare, that he acknowledgeth the Pope of Rome to be lord of his faith.

Moreover it is added, *that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the*

beast, or the number of his name: the meaning is, that no man might trade in the world, or do any thing among men; he might not even be suffered to live, except he had the mark of the beast on his forehead, or on his right hand; that is, unless he did profess and practise the worship, the religion, the laws, and decrees of the Pope. For the mark of the beast is put for his worship, religion, laws, decrees, institutions, and policy.

Moreover, the Pope's servants have not only his mark upon them, by which they may be known, but also the name of the beast; for they must be named after him, even as children bear the name of their fathers, and must be called by the Pope, or papa; Papists. And not only so, but also they have another mark upon them, and that is the number of his name, which is Latinos, or professors of the Latin religion, Latin kingdom, and Italian church, as will presently appear.

To come to a conclusion, and to make a brief recapitulation of all things here spoken concerning the second beast, which is Antichrist, let us consider how he hath by degrees proceeded and increased.

First, although he hath two horns like the Lamb, that is, civil and ecclesiastical power; yet he speaketh like the dragon, that is, he bendeth all his power and authority, words and works, for the Devil.

Secondly, he does as much as the first beast could do in the service of the dragon.

Thirdly, he causeth the first beast to be wor-

shipped, that is, he established the substance of his religion.

Fourthly, he maketh the image of the beast, that is, he addeth a form to the substance.

Fifthly, he putteth life into his image by his clergy.

Sixthly, he will have this image worshipped, and yielded unto, on pain of death.

Lastly, he will have all men, of all conditions, wear his livery, and receive his mark, as his hired and covenant servants.

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six, Rev. xiii. 18.

Now, last of all, the Holy Ghost tells us, that it is a very high point of wisdom and understanding, to count the number of the beast, and that is the number of a man: that is, such as a man endued with God's Spirit may find out. Then we are encouraged to search into it, since it is within the compass of man's reach. It is no impossible thing. If therefore we could find out his name, we should desire no more, as then the battle would be won, for his name would discover him, and expose him to all the world, and quite stop the mouths of the Papists, so that they should never have any thing more to say. For if St. John had said expressly, and in plain terms, that the Popes of Rome are this second beast, and the very Antichrist himself, then the Papists had been put to perpetual silence, and all controversies ended betwixt them and us for ever.

But the Holy Ghost does not tell us his name openly, but mystically, like many other things in this book, that the worldlings which fulfil them may be blinded, whilst the eyes of God's elect are opened to see into the truth of all these matters.

To come to the point, St. John only here sets down the numerative letters of the beast's name. He wrote in Greek, and has only set down three Greek letters or characters, which in Greek numeration make six hundred sixty and six. Now further we are to remark, that the numerative letters of the Greek word *Lateinos* make just this number. And further we are to observe, as a very remarkable circumstance, that Irenæus, an ancient father of the Church, who lived very near the apostles' times, mentions this word *Lateinos* as the name of the beast: and moreover affirmeth, that it was a common received opinion in his time, and before, that the beast should be so called.

Let us now consider how this agrees. First, we know that the numerative letters of *Lateinos* just answer to St. John's Greek numerative letters. Secondly, we know that Antichrist is the head of the Latin Church, or Latin empire; and therefore this very *Lateinos*. For here we do not enquire after the name of any particular man, but about the name of a kingdom; for the beast is a kingdom, and a succession of men. Now Italy, in old time, was called *Latium*, and the Italians, *Latini*; which sheweth of what country the beast should be. Moreover, the beast's name, or name of the Roman empire, is *Lateinos*; because the empire, both

under the heathen tyrants, and the Popes especially had all their religion, service, prayers, laws, decrees, writings, and translations in Latin. all was in Latin. The Pope preferred his Latin translation of the Bible to the Hebrew and Greek originals.

Thus then it is, St. John tells us flatly, *that the number of the beast is six hundred threescore and six*. Irenæus saith, that Lateinos is his name; which contains just that number. Therefore here we have his name; now is he found. For if his name be Lateinos, we need search no further; we know who he is; we know who is meant; for is not the Pope Lateinos? are not the succession of them Latini? are they not the heads of the Latin church, and Latin empire? have they not all their worship and service in Latin? are they not Latins? for what is the name of the Roman empire but Lateinos? and what is the name of the Popish hierarchy but Lateinos? True it is indeed, which the Papists say, that many names may be invented whose letters make this number: but the Spirit of God speaketh not of feigned names, for then we should have nothing but uncertainty: but he tells us to count the number of his name, which then the beast had, that is, Lateinos. I thus then conclude. The beast is a kingdom, and the Papacy is the kingdom of the Latins; therefore the Papacy is the beast.

The Papacy is Lateinos, and contains the number of the beast. For what other monarchy can be shewed since this Revelation was given, whose numerative letters contain this number? Assuredly none. And therefore, out of all doubt, St. John

points at the Roman empire, and monarchy of the Popes. For Lateinos doth contain the number of the beast, according to St. John's computation; and also his name, which is the Latin empire, or Roman empire.

And thus have we the description of these terrible monsters, the sea beast and the land beast; which, from the time of the apostles to the present, have done, and still will do much mischief in the Church of Christ until the time when they are to be completely destroyed, as we shall see by the following chapters.

CHAP. XIV.

WE have heard in the last chapter the description of the two great and dreadful beasts. We have heard how mightily they have prevailed now many years, and reigned as monarchs of the earth. And in this we are to hear the fall and ruin of them both. So that the main drift and scope of this chapter, and all the chapters following until the twentieth chapter, is to shew that both the Roman empire and the Papacy shall ebb as fast as ever they did flow, shall wane as fast as ever they did wax, shall decrease as fast as ever they rose up, even until they come to utter ruin and desolation.

In this chapter are seven principal things, which are as follow.

First, it sheweth that God had his Church upon

the earth even then, when it seemed to be utterly extinct, by the prevailing of the two outrageous beasts.

Secondly, it sheweth that the poor persecuted Church did sincerely and zealously worship God even in the fire and flames of afflictions.

Thirdly, it sheweth that the gospel shall be preached with great success in these last days throughout many kingdoms.

Fourthly, it sheweth that Rome shall fall down at the preaching of the gospel.

Fifthly, it sheweth that all persecuters shall be condemned, and cast into hell-fire for ever.

Sixthly, it sheweth that it shall go well with God's elect, which having refused the worship of the beast do live and die in the Lord.

Lastly, it describeth the day of judgment, wherein, all, both good and bad, shall have according to their deserts.

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads, Rev. xiv. 1.

Now at length the Holy Ghost sendeth Jesus Christ to assist the woman, which we heard of before, against the dragon and the two monstrous beasts, which would have torn her in pieces, and have utterly devoured her, if this Lamb, Jesus Christ, had not stepped in and rescued her. But some may say, What is a Lamb to encounter with a dragon, with a lion, with a leopard, and a bear? I answer, that although Christ be a Lamb to his

Church, even the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, and the Lamb that was slain from the beginning, for the redemption of his elect; yet to all his enemies he is a most strong and terrible lion, even the lion of the tribe of Juda, as he is called before.

Now this most terrible lion, even the Lord of hosts, the Lord mighty in battle, cometh forth to protect and defend the Church against all her enemies, who is of such infinite power, that neither the dragon nor the beasts shall be able to stand against him. For though he hath let them alone a long time, and suffered them to tyrannize over the woman his spouse, yet now will he exert himself to maintain her cause, and bear her up against them all: nay, he will make ready his bow, that he may shoot, and make his arrows drunk in the blood of his enemies and her's; and will whet his glittering sword, that he may sheath it in the hearts of Antichrist and all his adherents. Therefore now let both the great beasts and their sire tremble, for here is one that will subdue them, and lay them in the dust, that they shall never rise again: which is the lamb which St. John saw, in a vision, upon mount Sion, which signifies Christ present with the Church. For mount Sion was an ancient figure of the Church, as it is written. Mount Sion lying northward, is fair in situation; it is *the joy of the whole earth, and the city of the great King*. And again, *The law shall go forth out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*.

Moreover, St. John seeth here *with the Lamb an*

hundred forty and four thousand: that is, the particular members of the Church, putting a certain number for an uncertain; and specially alluding to the sealing of the twelve tribes of Israel, as hath been shewed before. For it might be demanded, where the Church was when all the world wondered and followed the first beast? and also when all both small and great, rich and poor, received the mark of the second beast? St. John answereth, that even then in the midst of the heat of persecutions God had his hid and invisible Church, whom Jesus Christ did protect and preserve even in the very flames of persecutions; being always present with them, and amongst them, as he said to his disciples, a little before his bodily departure from them, *Lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world*. And here he is said to *stand upon mount Sion with his hundred forty and four thousand*. And it is added, that this number of God's faithful elect children *had his Father's name written in their foreheads*: that is, they did profess and practise the doctrine and religion of God their Father only, utterly renouncing and abhorring the worship and religion of the beast. For the Father's name, in this place, is set opposite to the mark of the beast, to signify that as the worshippers of Antichrist received his mark, so the true worshippers of God received his sign, which is his Spirit, and the fruits thereof, whereby they were perfectly discerned from those who had the beast's mark.

So then it clearly appeareth from this place, that God preserved many thousands of his true wor-

shippers, even in the days of the great Antichrist, when there seemed to be very few or none remaining upon the earth, as it was in the days of Elias. In vain therefore do the Papists ask us, where our Church was before Luther's time? since the holy apostle here stoppeth their mouth, and telleth us plainly, that Christ had his little flock in the wilderness even then, when it was in the greatest straits, and, as we say, driven to its last hold. And therefore visibility is no essential evidence of the existence of the Church, as the Papists do most ignorantly dispute. For it is an absurd kind of reasoning, to say there is no Church at all, because it doth not visibly appear: as if a man should reason, that there is no moon in the heavens, because there is none seen, as in the change.

And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps, Rev. xiv. 2.

Here is set forth, how his company of true worshippers do magnify and praise God, for his great mercies towards them. First, John *heareth a voice from heaven*, that is, an heavenly voice, or the voice of the Church, praising and glorifying God. For we have heard before, that heaven, in this book, is sometimes put for the Church upon the earth, and the reasons thereof. Wheresoever, therefore, the Church is assembled to hear the word, and to pray and give thanks, there is a voice from heaven, or an heavenly voice. Now this voice is compared to three things: first, to the *sound of many waters*; secondly,

to the sound of a *great thunder*; thirdly, to the *voice of harpers harping with their harps*. It is likened to many waters, because it proceedeth from sundry sorts of people, of sundry nations, countries, and kingdoms; as the word *waters* is taken afterwards in this prophecy. It is compared to *thunder*, because the prayers and invocations of the true Church are as distinctly heard by God as thunder is upon the earth. It is compared to *harpers harping with their harps*, both because their spiritual worship and service is as sweet unto God as any music is to men; as also because all God's faithful people do harmonize among themselves, and in their worship, as the strings of a well-tuned instrument of music, or as many musicians playing together, which make a sweet and most melodious sound.

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before his four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth, Rev. xiv. 3.

Now it sheweth how this holy society of the faithful do continue their praising and glorifying of God. They are not weary of well doing, but hold on constantly in the course of God's worship, having new songs of thanksgiving in their mouths, and serving God daily with renewed affections, as men inflamed with the zeal of God's glory: and all this they perform before the throne, before the four beasts, and the elders; that is, in the presence of God, and his holy congregation. And no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand; that

is, none of those who loved not God, could inwardly feel and understand this spiritual worship but only the elect, to whom it is given to understand the secrets of God, and the mysteries of his Son's kingdom.

These are they which were not defiled with women ; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouths was found no guile : for they are without fault before the throne of God, Rev. xiv. 4, 5.

This holy company are not defiled with women, that is, with gross and divers sins, or rather with idolatrous pollutions. *For they are virgins*, that is, chaste worshippers of God, which are not polluted with the defilements of Antichrist. *These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.* They hear his voice, they profess his worship, and obey his doctrine ; they abhor Antichrist, they follow not the beast, nor receive his mark. *They are redeemed from among men, and bought from the earth*, as it is said before ; that is, they are redeemed and bought with a price from the corrupt mass of mankind, and cursed race of Adam, that *they might be the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb* ; that is, wholly consecrated to his worship, and to serve him in righteousness and true holiness all the days of their life. *In their mouths was found no guile* : that is, they do declare their innocency and uprightness, both in their words and works, as those which Christ hath chose out of this world, and bought with a price

through his blood, by whom they are without spot or wrinkle before God.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters, Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

Hitherto the Holy Ghost hath taught us how the Church was preserved under the tyranny of Antichrist, and the greatest waves of persecution; and that even then they did purely and faithfully worship the true God. Now he proceedeth to predict the ruin and downfall of Antichrist, and plainly to prophecy the utter destruction of the kingdom of Babel. This doctrine is therefore very gratifying, and requireth of us great attention, because it doth so much concern our good, and the good of the whole Church; also, because we live in the days wherein it is in part fulfilled.

First, therefore, we are to understand what is meant by the angel here mentioned. It does not mean any celestial angel, or invisible spirit, as the word in various places is intended to signify; but by this angel, and the two angels following, are meant all the faithful ministers of the gospel which should be raised up in these last days, for the overthrow of Rome, and the delivering of the Church from the captivity of Antichrist: which may plainly appear from this, that this angel preacheth the ever-

lasting gospel unto them that dwell on the earth, which cannot properly be said of the celestial spirits.

We have heard, out of the tenth chapter, that Jesus Christ did open the book, which is the Bible, and did give authority to his faithful ministers to preach and publish the doctrine thereof to many nations, countries, and kingdoms: now with that agreeth this which is here spoken of, and is a further declaration of that which is there set down. For as there Jesus Christ cometh down from heaven, and openeth the book, which had been long shut up under the darkness of Popery, and the smoke which came out of the bottomless pit; so here Christ Jesus raised up his faithful ministers and preachers to publish and proclaim the doctrine of the gospel, which had long lain hid under the persecutions of the two monstrous and most hideous beasts. To this also agreeth that which is written in the eighteenth chapter of this book, where St. John seeth an angel come down from heaven, having great power, so that the earth was lighted with his glory. By which angel, is meant all the preachers of this age. And the angel is said to have great power. For what is more powerful than the ministry of the word? And moreover it is said, that the earth was lightened with his glory; that is, with the brightness of the preaching of the gospel, whereby the darkness of Popery was dispersed and driven away.

Moreover it is here said, that this *angel flyeth in the midst of heaven*; that is, very swiftly carrieth

this everlasting gospel through all the Church. For when God's appointed time was come, in which Popery was to be destroyed, he caused his everlasting gospel to be sent abroad, and to spread over many kingdoms and nations, as we see at this day. Now because these kingdoms, where God would have the knowledge of his gospel divulged, were many and great, is expedition required: and this angel doth carry it, not standing, but flying. And all this we see perfectly fulfilled with our eyes, when God raised up Luther, Zuinglius, Melancthon, Peter Viret, Calvin, Bucer, Bullinger, Peter Martyr, and all their worthy successors unto this day, which have spread the everlasting gospel very far, and carried it very swiftly over England, Scotland, Germany, Denmark, Poland, Sweden, Russia, France, and most other parts of the world.

Another reason why this angel is said to fly in the midst of heaven, is because no power of man shall ever be able to stop the course of this everlasting gospel which this angel carrieth abroad; no more than men are able to stop the course of the sun in the heavens, or a cloud in the sky. For this angel flyeth in the midst of heaven, far above the reach of the beast, and all kings and potentates that stand for the kingdom of the beast. Therefore let them do their utmost, they shall never be able to stop the course of the gospel. For it is called the arm of God; and his very arm holdeth it forth to the world, and who is able to bend it in, or to turn it backward?

There are three reasons why the gospel is called everlasting, viz.

First, because it is in its own nature everlasting, as it is written, *The word of the Lord endureth for ever.*

Secondly, because it putteth us in possession of everlasting things: as it is written, *Thy word, O Lord, endureth for ever in heaven.*

Thirdly, and principally, because as it was long before Antichrist arose, so it shall continue, when he and his kingdom is destroyed.

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters, Rev. xiv. 7.

Here is set down, the doctrine which this angel preacheth with a loud voice, that is, with great zeal. The sum whereof is this, *Fear God, and give glory unto him; and worship him that made heaven and earth, &c.* The only sense is, that the true and ever-living God should be feared, and worshipped, and all glory should be given to him alone, through Christ; and none to Antichrist, none to cardinals or legates, none to angels, none to saints, none to images, crosses, or crucifixes.

Here then is set down an abridgment of the doctrine of this everlasting gospel; namely, that men should fear God only, and worship him, and give all glory to him alone, and not to any creatures. And the reason is given, because the hour of his judgment is come, that is, the time of the manifestation of the gospel, or laws of the Most

High God: for so the word judgment is often taken in the scriptures. Here are we to observe one special thing, which is, that the gospel, which this angel carrieth, containeth the brief sum of all the doctrine which Luther, Calvin, Peter Martyr, and the rest, have taught out of God's word, and agreeth in all points with it. For what else did they all preach, teach, and write, but that men should turn from idols to the living God? from fearing, glorifying, and worshipping creatures, to fear, worship, and glorify God alone, who hath made all things? What other thing do all the preachers of this age publish and proclaim, in all their sermons, but this, *Fear God, and give glory to him only.* Is not this the sum of the doctrine of all the preachers of England, Scotland, Germany, France, Denmark, and all the rest? And therefore I conclude, that this angel must needs be understood to be the preachers of this last age, which have now these many years sounded the trumpet of the gospel against all the inventions of Popery. And, blessed be God, we see these things fall out in our days, and are eye-witnesses of the fulfilling of them.

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, Rev. xiv. 8.

Here is set down the blessed effect of the preaching of this everlasting gospel, which is the downfall of Babylon. For, as when the clear sun ariseth upon the earth, the thick mists and clouds are dispersed; even so when the bright beams of the

gospel doth shine forth unto the world, Babylon, that dark kingdom, vanisheth away. And, as it is written in the eighteenth chapter, *So soon as the earth is lightened with the glory of this everlasting gospel, Babylon immediately falleth.*

Therefore now, before I go any further, my purpose, through the assistance of God, is to prove these five points of this verse, and that which followeth unto the twentieth chapter, to wit :

First, that Babylon here, signifieth Rome.

Secondly, that Rome shall fall, and how.

Thirdly, that Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter desolation in this life.

Fourthly, by whom, and when it shall be overthrown.

Lastly, the causes of the utter ruin and overthrow thereof.

But before I go about to prove that Babylon, here, is Rome, I would have it carefully observed what is meant by Rome, viz. not the topography of Rome, that is, so much ground only as is compassed within the walls of that city, but the government and power that is claimed by that monarchy, where of Rome is the head.

By Rome, is meant the power and authority of Rome: or, to speak plainly, by Rome, is meant the Roman monarchy. Further, we are here to observe the reason why the Holy Ghost calleth Rome, Babylon ; for Rome, literally and properly taken, is not Babylon, inasmuch as they were two different cities, one in Italy, the other in Chaldea : but Rome is called Babylon mystically, figuratively, and by a

kind of allusion. For as the old eastern Babylon did a long time oppress the Church of the Jews, so Rome, this western Babylon, hath long oppressed the Church of the Christians. As the eastern Babylon did many years hold down the people of God in miserable bondage and servitude, so the western Babylon did a long time keep the Christian Church in spiritual slavery and misery. In which respects Rome is spiritually compared to Sodom and Egypt: to Sodom, for filthiness; and to Egypt, for idolatry, and keeping God's Church in spiritual bondage and slavery. And thus we see the reason why Rome is called Babylon; and that the passage is not to be understood literally, but figuratively; and that one is put for the other, on account of their resembling each other in their conduct to the people of God.

Now, having shewed the reason why Rome is called Babylon, and what is meant by Rome, we are to proceed to the first point; which is, to prove that Babylon, in this place, signifieth Rome; which although it be granted by all sound divines, and declared in the writings of the good and learned, both new and old, so that it can need no greater proof. Yet I will add three or four reasons out of this book, to make it more plain and apparent.

First, therefore, I do thus reason out of the seventeenth chapter and last verse: *Babylon is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth*: but there was no other city which did reign over the kings of the earth, when John writ this book, but Rome; therefore Rome is Babylon. For, as for

Jerusalem, it was at that time made an heap of stones. The first point is declared by the angel of God, expounding unto John what is meant by the great whore, whose damnation he had shewed him before; and by the woman which sat upon a scarlet-coloured beast. *The woman which thou sawest, saith the angel to St. John, is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth:* that is to say, Rome, or the Romish Church. For the angel could not speak more plainly, except he should have named Rome, than to say thus, *The woman, the great whore of Babylon, is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.* For if one should say the great city of England, every man knoweth that thereby is meant London; if one should say the great city of France, every one knoweth that thereby is meant Paris: so when the angel saith, *the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth*, all that lived in those times knew that thereby was meant Rome. For Rome was the chief city of the monarchy, and is put in this book for the whole monarchy, and the religion thereof, as hath been said before.

My second reason is this: *Babylon is the mother of whoredoms, and abominations of the earth. Babylon is that great whore, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication: with the wine of whose fornications the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk.*

But Rome, and none but Rome, is such a one. Therefore Rome is Babylon.

My third argument is this: Babylon is that city which hath seven different governments: but only

Rome hath had seven different kinds of governments; therefore Rome is Babylon.

The proposition is proved from the words of the angel, expounding unto John what is meant by the seven heads of the scarlet-coloured beast whereupon the woman sat. *The seven heads (saith he) are seven kings*; that is, seven orders or states of kingly government: for seven kings, in this place, are not put for seven men which were kings, as some do take it, but for seven different governments, as it is taken in Daniel. *The four great beasts, saith the angel there, are four kings*; that is, four kingdoms, governments, or monarchies, as all men know. So here, by seven kings is meant the seven several regiments of Rome; that is to say, by kings, consuls, decemviri, dictators, triumviri, emperors, and popes, whereof *the first five were then fallen* when John wrote; *one was*, that is, the empire; *and one was to come*, that is the papacy.

My last argument is this: Babylon is that city which is situate upon seven hills; but only Rome, of all cities in the world, is situated upon seven hills: therefore Rome is Babylon.

The proposition is declared by the angel; which saith, in the seventeenth chapter, that the seven heads of the scarlet-coloured beast, *are seven mountains whereon the woman sitteth*; that is, seven hills whereon the city of Rome is situated, whose names are these, Capitolinus, Palatinus, Aventinus, Exquilinus, Celius, Viminalis, and Quirinalis, as all poets and historians assert.

One saith thus of Rome, *Septem que una sibi muro circumdedit arces.*

Another thus, *Septem urbs alta ingis totoquæ præsidet orbe.*

Another called Rome, *Eptalophos, the city with seven heads*, that is, seven hills.

It is clear then, from these reasons, that Babylon, in this place, signifieth Rome. As for the exposition of the Papists, which affirm that Babylon, here, signifieth the universal society of the wicked, it is ridiculous ; for the Holy Ghost saith, *Babylon is that city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.* But to say that the universal society of all the wicked reigneth over the kings of the earth, is absurd and ridiculous. Therefore to say that Babylon is the universal society of the wicked, is absurd and ridiculous. The distinction of the Jesuits here, is also as frivolous as their expositions ; for they say, If Babylon be Rome, then it must be understood of Rome under the heathen emperors ; but not under the popes.

But the angel saith, *The woman, that is the whore of Babylon, or Antichrist, sitteth upon seven mountains: ergo, she sitteth at Rome; and Rome is the seat of Antichrist; and consequently Rome, under the Popes, is Babylon.* Moreover, we may reason thus against the Popish distinction : that which was Babylon under the heathen emperors, is the same which is here said to be the chief city and seat of Antichrist. But Rome was then Babylon, therefore Rome is now Babylon ; for Rome is that city which

the angel saith should be the seat of Antichrist. And this book doth shew, that the great Antichrist should reign in the same city where the heathen emperors had reigned; and therefore it standeth firm that Rome, under the Pope's, is Babylon.

This being then granted, that Babylon, here, is Rome, it followeth that Rome shall fall: for the Holy Ghost saith, *Babylon is fallen*; speaking in the present tense, as the manner of the scripture is in prophecying of things to come. For whatsoever God hath determined to come to pass, is as it were already done, because of the certainty of it; and for this cause also the word is doubled, *It is fallen! it is fallen!*

We see then most clearly, that almost 1500 years before Rome began to fall, the certain fall thereof was foretold. This passage itself is clear enough to prove my second point, which is, that Rome shall fall. But my purpose is, to reduce and gather all the five chapters following to certain heads, to prove the main points which I have proposed. First, then, I reason thus to prove the second point, that Rome shall fall. That city and kingdom which hath the seven vials of God's wrath emptied and poured down upon it, cannot stand, but must needs fall. But Rome is that city which hath the seven vials of God's wrath poured down upon it; therefore Rome cannot stand long, but must fall. The proposition is manifest, and not to be denied. The assumption is proved throughout all the sixteenth chapter, and especially in the tenth and twelfth verses; where *the vials of God's wrath are expressly said to be*

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poured down upon the throne of the beast ; and in the second verse of that chapter it is asserted, that the second vial was poured down upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. How then can the throne of the beast hold out ? or, how can they which have received the beast's mark, stand up long ? for there is great emphasis, or vehemency, in the manner of speech. For he doth not simply say, the wrath of God, but the fulness of God's wrath : he doth not say, it should be a little sprinkled, but poured down upon the kingdom of the beast. How then can the kingdom of the beast stand, that is exposed to the wrath of God ? surely it must needs fall.

My second reason is this : *The beast that was, and is not, and yet is, shall go into perdition.* But Rome is the beast that was, and is not, and yet is ; therefore Rome shall go into perdition. The assumption is set down in chap. xvii. 8. For the Roman monarchy was great in the days of Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Claudius, and Tiberius ; and therefore it is said, that *it was*. But in the reign of Nero, Otho, Galba, and Vitellius, it was greatly decayed ; and therefore it is said, *it is not* : meaning not so great as it had been, and yet it still existed ; and therefore it is said, *and yet is*. *Now this beast shall go into perdition.* Therefore the Roman monarchy shall be destroyed, and consequently the papacy. For the Roman empire holdeth up the papacy ; as it is written, *that the woman, or whore of Babylon, sitteth upon the scarlet-coloured beast, which had seven heads and ten horns ;* that is, the Roman monarchy,

which beareth up the whore, and beareth up the papacy.

But the Holy Ghost saith, *This beast*, that is the Roman empire, *shall go into perdition*. Then it followeth, that the papacy shall follow after: for if the beast that she sitteth upon, and which beareth her, fall under her, then she must needs fall, together with him. But we see, God be thanked, that the Roman monarchy is, in a manner, quite fallen; therefore the papacy cannot stand long.

My third argument is this: *The beast that was and is not, being even the eighth, and one of the seventh, shall go into destruction*. But Rome is the beast that was, and is not, being the eighth, and one of the seventh: therefore Rome shall go into destruction: the proposition set down in chap. xvii. 11. For the papacy, or dominion of the Popes, is the seventh head of the beast, in respect of their civil power, and yet a beast by itself, that is, an eighth in respect of their ecclesiastical power. Now the angel saith flatly, *They shall both go into destruction*, that is, both the empire and the papacy. For as the dominion of the Popes goeth down, so also their worship and religion goeth down with it: and for this cause it is expressly set down in the nineteenth chapter, that *the beast and the false prophet*, that is, the Roman empire, and the papacy, *were both destroyed together*. Since, then, the Holy Ghost hath spoken it twice, that Rome shall go into perdition, and shall go into destruction, I take the fall of Rome to be a very certain event. But how shall it fall? and some man will say, wherein shall

it fall? I answer, that it shall fall in the credit and estimation of her doctrine; it shall fall in wealth and riches; it shall fall in power and authority. And in all these it shall fall by degrees, as it did rise up by degrees: it shall not fall at once, as it did not rise up once.

This is set down in the sixteenth chapter, where the fall of Rome is compared to the drying up of the river Euphrates, which was dried up by degrees. Thus it is: Euphrates was a great river, which did run very near unto the old Babylon, in Chaldea, and it was the protection and fortification of the city; insomuch, that when Cyrus and Darius, the kings of the Medes and Persians, laid siege against it, they could not take it till they digged water-trenches, and had turned the water into another course; so that *the way was prepared for them to pass over*. Now, as this Euphrates was the strength and fortification of old Babylon, so the honour, wealth, riches, power, and authority of Rome, is the very fortification of it. But the punishing angel is commanded to pour down the vial of wrath upon this Euphrates, that is, upon all that upholdeth or fortifieth Rome, and forthwith it dried up; that is, all the credit, power, riches, and authority of Rome, did diminish daily, doth diminish, and shall diminish by degrees unto the end of the world. For the utter destruction of Rome is not yet come; but its power is greatly diminished from what it was four-score years ago; and if it continues declining, as it assuredly will, it will indeed be reduced to a very low condition.

Since Luther's time we know how the Pope's Euphrates hath dried up; but there is yet much water left, and yet it is too deep for the kings of the earth to pass over and take it. But it shall ebb so low, that the kings of Europe shall easily pass over and take it, as we shall hear by and by. But in the meantime we see that it is falling, and that the work of God goeth forward every day. For now, God be thanked, many kings and princes, with great multitudes of their subjects, have their eyes opened to behold that the Romish religion is false, and that the papacy is the very kingdom of the great Antichrist. And whereas before they worshipped the beast, now they hold up their hands only to the God of heaven, and glorifieth him in his Son Jesus Christ.

Now many laws are made in several kingdoms and provinces to abolish that usurped power of the bishop of Rome; many acts, edicts, and injunctions are set forth, in different nations and kingdoms of Europe, to destroy, root out, and deface all monuments of idolatry and superstition which Antichrist had erected in those kingdoms.

Now the popes, which formerly were honoured as gods in the earth, are universally considered as impostors by all true Christians. Doth not all this clearly prove that Babylon is fallen, and doth fall by degrees? we need no further proof for this second point.

But here we are further to observe, that the Jesuits perceiving the great decline of Rome, and the continual drying of their Euphrates, do bestir

themselves to prevent its being completely exhausted, and to make every exertion to uphold the power which they still have, and, if possible, to prevent their final overthrow. And as the inhabitants of Babylon would make use of every means to prevent their enemies from passing the Euphrates, so the Church of Rome employs every expedient to prevent the decline of her riches, and temporal dominions; they being the chief support of her spiritual authority, now tottering over the brink of ruin.

All this doth appear out of chap. xvi. of this prophecy, where St. John, in a vision, seeth *three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophets*. By which frogs the Holy Ghost meaneth the Jesuits and seminary priests, which are compared to frogs for three reasons; first, that as frogs delight in unclean waters, so the jesuits delight in the polluted streams of idolatry and superstition; secondly, as frogs make a great croaking in their marshy grounds, so the jesuits make a great noise in kings' courts, in noblemen and gentlemen's houses, and in almost every place into which they can gain admittance, continually talking of the Pope's supremacy, the Pope's holiness, the Pope's blessing, the Pope's keys, the Pope's power, Peter's chair, Peter's successor, and Christ's vicar; thirdly, as frogs are all of one nature and quality, delighting in croaking and living in puddles, so the Jesuits are all of one mind and disposition in evil, croaking every where to

maintain their Euphrates, and daily indulging themselves in the most disgraceful and wicked vices.

But that I may more fully persuade the reader, that by these frogs are meant the jesuits and seminary priests, let us seriously weigh that which goeth before, and that which followeth after in this text, and we shall be fully convinced of it. First, it is said, verse 10, that when *the fifth angel poured out his vial of God's wrath upon the throne of the beast, by and by his kingdom waxed dark*; that is, the majesty, power, pomp, credit, and estimation of Antichrist began to be observed to diminish, and to suffer a great eclipse; which thing was fulfilled shortly after Luther's preaching. And presently it followeth, that *they gnawed their tongues for sorrow*; that is, they were full of fury and rage against all such as sent the gospel abroad, *by means of which* their Babylon was shaken. For at the first, when the gospel was preached they did despise it, as a thing which they could easily suppress; but within a short time they found, that neither by excommunication, by which, in former times, they had, as it were with lightning and thunder, caused kings and nations to tremble; neither by wars and bloody slaughter, neither by any skill in learning, nor by treacheries, they could prevail any thing, but that the gospel did still more and more lay open their wickedness; then did they become, and so do they continue at this day, as men mad with sorrow and rage; which the Holy Ghost expresseth, in saying, that *they gnawed their tongues with sorrow, and blasphemed God, &c.* Whereby it is evident that

the beast, and all that received his mark, are full of fiery hatred and malice, and cannot tell which way to be revenged. For the more they strive, the more they lose. Fain would they have Popery restored to its ancient credit and dignity: and they devise what they can to bring it about; but it will not be. For their kingdom waxeth darker and darker, weaker and weaker: and that is a dagger unto them, and a grief above all grief, which maketh them gnaw their tongues, and gnash their teeth for sorrow. But for all this *they repented not of their works*, saith St. John; and therefore God is more incensed against them, and causeth *the sixth angel to pour out another vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof dried up*; as we have heard.

Now then observe carefully, and note it diligently, that the frogs come forth upon the darkening of the kingdom of the beast, and the drying up of their Euphrates. For who knoweth not, that the Pope, and his accomplices, perceiving the weakening and diminishing of their kingdom, have sent out these jesuits and seminary priests into all parts of Europe, to repair the ruins of Rome if it were possible? And this is one circumstance which proves, that by these frogs are to be understood the jesuits. But let us proceed to open the whole description of the Holy Ghost, that it may yet more plainly appear. First, these frogs are called *unclean spirits*, because they are the very agents of the Devil, full of all filthiness and wickedness. Secondly, they are called *spirits*, because they come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false pro-

phet. Thirdly, they are called *three* in number, being in truth nearer unto three thousand, because they proceed out of three several mouths, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet; that is, the devil, the Roman empire, and the papacy. Three horrible monsters, which with one consent conspire together against the gospel to uphold their Babylon. Now these three frogs are said to come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet; because they come with the very mind and message of the Pope and the Roman empire; and so, consequently, with the very mind and spirit of the dragon. They are sent on the devil's errand, and by the Popes, into all countries and kingdoms, and are taught what they shall say, and instructed what they shall do, and what courses they shall pursue towards men, both kings, nobles, and people: and for this cause the Holy Ghost saith, they came out of the very mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. And although these jesuits and seminary priests are called by their favourites Catholic doctors, holy fathers, &c. yet the Holy Ghost saith flatly, they are the spirits of devils working false and feigned miracles, and with great power of error deceiving the simple and blind multitude.

We see then that the Holy Ghost, in all this description, doth plainly mean the jesuits and seminary priests. For to whom can these things here spoken of refer, but only to them? And do not we who live in these days, evidently see the fulfilling of all these things? Surely we cannot but see

and feel them, unless we shut our eyes to them. But the Holy Ghost goeth yet further, and doth more fully point them out unto us; describing them by their office, which is, *to go unto the king's of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

Who is ignorant that the jesuits and seminary priests are sent out to all the kings and nobles of the whole world, that favour them and their proceedings? Are they not dispersed into every part of the world, in order to establish their own false doctrines, and to prevent the introduction of the true religion of the Bible? Nay, as the Holy Ghost saith, the chief end of their coming abroad is to solicit and gather the kings of the earth unto battle against God, against Christ, and against all true professors of religion. This battle is here called, *The battle of the great day of God Almighty*; that is, the battle wherein the Almighty God will have the victory. For it followeth, that the jesuits and seminary priests did prevail with the seduced kings of the earth so far, as to gather them together to a place which, in Hebrew, is called Armageddon, that is to say, a place where they shall be destroyed, and that with such a horrible slaughter, that the place shall take a name thereof. For it was an usual thing among the Hebrews, to call the place where any famous thing fell out by a name which did report the same to all posterity, as Kibroth Hataavah, the graves of concupisence; Hamon Gog, the multitude of Gog; and divers such like. And so here Armageddon, the destruction of an

army; because the kings of the earth and their armies, which shall fight against the Church at the instigation of the jesuits, shall come to a place where they shall have a notable overthrow. This word Armageddon may fitly be derived of two Hebrew words, that is to say, Cherem, which signifieth destruction; and Gedudh, which signifieth an army; or, as some say, and that very judicially, it may come of Gnarnah Gidnon, which signifieth the subtilty of destruction; because the blind kings and nobles of the earth shall, by the subtilty and crafty persuasions of the jesuits and seminary priests, be enticed to fight against the Protestants, in a place where they shall have a great overthrow. Some derive Armageddon of Har, which in Hebrew signifieth a mountain, and Megiddon, which is the place where the godly king Josias was slain; and so this place should be called Armageddon, the Mountain of Megiddo, for the slaughter of kings shall be there. To the which the prophet Zechariah alludeth, saying, *In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddon.*

Well, we do see that all these significations and derivations of Armageddon, come to one thing in effect; which is, that the great armies which assemble themselves in battle against the Lord, shall be destroyed: and therefore it is not of much consequence to dispute which is the more likely signification of the word. But this let us observe for our comfort, that whensoever we shall see the kings and captains, nobles and potentates of the

earth, being solicited by the jesuits, priests, and the false prophet, to levy great armies, and make great powers to fight against the gospel, and the true professors thereof, for the maintenance of great Babylon, they shall not prevail, but be utterly overthrown and destroyed: as, in part, we see fulfilled in the year of our Lord 1588, when the great, and, as they thought, invincible armada of the Spaniards, which was long in preparing, and which was at last, by the instigation of the jesuits, brought against us, came to Armageddon, as we know, God be praised. And for the future, in case of such an attempt, let them look for the like success.

To come to a conclusion upon this point, we do plainly see that Rome falleth, their kingdom waxeth dark, their Euphrates drieth up: they perceive it. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, send out their frogs into all countries and kingdoms, hoping to prevent it by the help of the kings of the earth, and especially the king of Spain: but all in vain, for they must come to Armageddon when they have done their utmost. For God fighteth against them, God bringeth them down, and no power of man is able to uphold them.

But now let us proceed to prove the third main point; which is, that Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter desolation. For all sound divines are persuaded of the fall of Babylon, and grant that it is falling: but all are not so thoroughly persuaded of the final fall thereof in this life. Therefore now I will prove from the scriptures, that Rome shall fall. First, if the things be deeply considered,

and narrowly looked into, which St. John saith shall take place upon the pouring forth of the seventh vial of God's wrath by the seventh angel, they do fully portend the utter overthrow of Rome. For the seventh vial is not poured upon the earth, or sea, or fountains of waters, or on the sun, as the first four vials were, which signifieth some particular judgment: but it was poured forth into the very air, which signifieth the universality of it, and containeth the most general and most severe judgment and vengeance of Almighty God upon the whole body of the kingdom of Antichrist, a little before the last day.

The text saith, that upon the pouring forth of this vial, *there was a loud voice heard out of the temple of heaven from the throne*; that is, from the very presence of God, saying, *It is done! It is done!* The overthrow of Rome is completed, and all things finished which belong to the pouring forth of the seven vials, which contain the seven last plagues by which the whole wrath of God is fulfilled, as appeareth in chap. xv. as before it is said, *Babylon is fallen*, because it should certainly fall: so here God himself saith, *It is done!* because it shall certainly be done. For whatsoever God hath determined to be done, is as it were already done, because it shall most certainly take place. Since then the Lord hath pronounced this of Rome, there remaineth nothing but the daily accomplishment of it: and let all the Papists know for a certainty, that they must be brought to account, and receive their reward, for there is no means of evading it.

For hath the Lord spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? Now upon this which God saith, *It is done!* it followeth presently, that there *were voices, thunderings, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, even so mighty an earthquake.* What is meant by thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes, in this book, I have before shewed; to wit, commotions, seditions, tumults, uproars, and divisions of states, kingdoms, and commonwealths; and then the meaning of this place is, that there shall be horrible shakings, concussions, tumults, and great destruction in all the kingdoms which are subject to Antichrist; none of them shall escape. For this seventh vial of God's wrath upon the kingdom of the beast, is compared to a most horrible and blustering tempest raised up in the whole air, that is, in all places of Antichrist's dominions. And it is particularly to be remarked, as a thing of great moment, that the Holy Ghost saith, *there never was such an earthquake as this since the world began, and since men were upon the earth.* For assuredly so soon as the seventh angel poured forth his vial, the kingdom of Popery shall fall rapidly, which shall not be long before the end of the world, as all circumstances here doth shew. After all this, St. John telleth us the effect of this thundering, lightning, and extraordinary earthquake; which is, *that the great city was divided into three parts;* that is, there shall be a most terrible rent and division in the city of Rome, and throughout all the Pope's dominions.

What this rent and division is, and how it shall be, I cannot determine, being a thing to come, as all the rest comprehended under the pouring forth of the seventh vial. But this I am sure of, that Rome shall fall; and there shall be such tumults, uproars, disputations, and divisions in Rome, and throughout all the Romish jurisdiction, as was never heard nor read of since the world was created. For St. John addeth, that *Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath*; that is, God doth now at length call to mind all the wrongs done to his people, and all the righteous blood shed, for the space of seven or eight hundred years, by the whore of Babylon, that he may be fully revenged, and execute the fierceness of his wrath both upon her and her whole kingdom; yea, and that in such a terrible and wrathful manner, that there shall be no place to fly into for succour. For St. John saith, *Every isle fled away, and the mountains were not found*: meaning, that the Papists in that day shall have neither mountain nor island to fly unto.

And, last of all, the Holy Ghost saith, that *there fell a great hail like talents out of heaven upon the idolaters: insomuch, that they blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail. For the plague thereof was exceeding great*. A talent was about the weight of threescore pounds, as some write. Then it followeth, that this hail of God's wrath upon the Papists, shall be most terrible and fearful, and beat them down to the ground. Now when this hail cometh, as assuredly *it will come*,

then shall the kingdom of Popery be crushed to pieces: and therefore it is no wonder if the idolaters, seeing all this, be in a most horrible rage, and blaspheme God, as St. John saith, because of this exceeding and most extraordinary plague which shall then come upon them.

But to conclude all then, this last vial is poured into the air, (God saith, *It is done!*) an extraordinary earthquake followeth; the great city of Rome is rent; Babylon called to her account; and fearful hailstones of wrath poured down upon the idolaters: therefore I do conclude, that Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter destruction in this life.

Now let us proceed to further proof. In the eighteenth chapter of this book, the whore of Babylon saith in her heart, *I sit, being a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come at one day, death, and sorrow, and famine: and she shall be burnt with fire. For that God which condemneth her, is a strong Lord.*

First, here Rome is described, as she was in the height and top of her pride and prosperity, when she held dominion over the kings of the earth, and boasted that she was the head of the Catholic Church; carrying herself very haughtily above all kings and emperors, treading upon their necks, and making them attend, as it is said, barefoot at her gates. She is also represented as saying, that she was no widow; that is, no solitary or desolate person, but one that had many lovers, which were strong to defend her, so as she should feel no want, nor see any sorrow. But the time will come, and

draweth on apace, wherein she shall be thoroughly punished for her presumption and intolerable pride. For the Holy Ghost saith, *Her plagues shall come in one day, that is, suddenly, short, and speedily; even death, sorrow, and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire. For that God which condemneth her, is a strong Lord.*

If this be not plain enough to prove the utter overthrow of Rome, I know not what can be plain enough. For if death, famine, and fire will not pull her down, I know not what will. But St. John saith flatly, that God himself, who is a strong Lord, will oppose himself against Rome, and condemn her. Who then can uphold her? can the king of Spain? can the cardinals? can the emperor? can all the dukes of Italy, and all the potentates of the earth that take part with her? No, they are all too weak. *For if God take against a man, who can deliver him, saith the Holy Ghost? For he doth whatsoever he will.* And again, *God is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who ever hardened his heart against him and prospered? If God call not back his anger, the most proud hearts are bowed under him.* And God saith, in Ezekiel xxii. *Can thy hands be strong, or can thy heart endure in the day that I shall have to do with thee?* Then it followeth, that though Babylon sit as a queen, and all her lovers take part with her, yet because the strong Lord is against her, she shall come to utter destruction.

Some of good judgment in the truth, have gathered from this place, that the very city of Rome shall be burnt with fire: but this I am sure of, that

the phrase of *burning with fire*, doth, in the Prophets, always signify an utter destruction and desolation of a city or a kingdom ; and therefore it followeth, that Rome shall be utterly destroyed.

But behold yet a stronger and plainer proof. For St. John saith, *A mighty angel took up a stone like a millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, With such a violence shall that great city, Babylon, be cast down, and shall be found no more.* All men know, that old Babylon, in Chaldea, was destroyed by the Medes and Persians, long before St. John writ this book ; and therefore that is not meant here ; but the new Babylon, which is Rome, as hath been shewn before. The phrases of speech, and the signs which the prophets used to declare the destruction and desolation of old Babylon, here allude to the destruction of Rome. For we read in the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the prophet having written in a book all the evil that should come upon Babel, for holding God's people so long in captivity, said to Seraiah, *When thou comest unto Babel thou shalt read all these words, and when thou hast made an end of reading this book, thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates, and shalt say, Thus shall Babel be drowned, and shall not rise up from the evil that I will bring upon her, although they weary themselves.*

Now let us consider how this agreeth with that which is here set down, and we shall find that all things here set down, with greater force, to express, as it were, a deeper vengeance, and a more heavy and irrecoverable destruction. First, there is a

man, here is a mighty angel ; there the man taketh up a stone, here the angel taketh up a great stone, like a millstone ; there the stone is cast into the river, here into the deep sea. All these circumstances being applied to Rome, do greatly aggravate the matter, and very plainly shew that it shall fall, without hope of recovery. For the Lord declareth, by this forcible sign of casting a millstone into the sea, that the city and kingdom of Antichrist shall be cast down into perdition, and shall lie overwhelmed and drowned in the same for ever.

For if old Babylon was utterly destroyed, and came to a final desolation in this life ; much more shall Rome, as the Holy Ghost saith. But old Babylon came to utter ruin and desolation in this life, as both Isaiah and Jeremiah doth witness : therefore new Babylon, that is, Rome, shall come to utter destruction ; and, as the Holy Ghost here saith, *shall be found no more*, or shall fall, without hope of recovery.

History doth affirm, that Rome hath been sundry times destroyed by the Goths and Vandals, and others ; yea, once fired and quite burnt up, but afterward built and raised up again by the emperors. But here the Holy Ghost saith expressly, that it shall have a final fall, and an irrecoverable destruction. For can a millstone cast into the bottom of the sea, ever be got up again ? No ; it is impossible. Therefore let the jesuits and seminary priests do what they can, they shall never set up Rome again ; they shall never restore her to her former state and dignity ; they shall never repair her credit

again. Let the pope and cardinals, the king of Spain, and all the world, and all the devils in hell join together, they shall never get up this millstone out of the bottom of the sea: for the angel hath cast it down with such violence, that no power can ever raise it up again.

True it is, indeed, that the jesuits, the seminary priests, and all the papists, exert themselves in all parts of the world, and adventure themselves in a most desperate manner, to restore again the credit of Popery, and to set up again the dignity and the power of the Pope, and the glory of their Church and city: but though their bold enterprises do make many even to fear that they will again one day prevail, we may be certain, that although here and there they may support for a time some ruinous parts of their rotten frame, it shall in the end fall down upon their heads, and come to utter desolation.

Indeed Rome standeth at this present time, and Popery is not quite fallen: but their real character is discovered, their credit is lost, their power is broken; and so their ruin is begun, and the time draweth on when it shall be fully accomplished. He that reads of the power, the pomp, the riches, and estimation of the Church of Rome some centuries past, and looketh upon it now, must see a wonderful alteration. It seemed then to be in no danger of shaking; for the emperor, and the kings of the earth, stood forth with all their force and might, power and policy, to uphold it: but, God be thanked, we see how it is already come

down, and shall come down every day more and more, whosoever may assert the contrary.

But behold yet more and more plain proof of the utter desolation of Rome. For St. John describeth the eternal desolation thereof, by saying that those things which are in inhabited cities, shall no longer be found in Rome.

First he saith, *There shall be no more any voice of harpers, musicians, pipers, and trumpeters heard in Rome*; that is, all music shall cease, which argueth an utter desolation. For what inhabited cities are without music?

Secondly, he saith, *There shall be no craftsman of what trade soever found in Rome*: which argueth an utter desolation. For what flourishing city is without artificers?

Thirdly, he saith, *No light of a candle shall shine any more in Rome*: which argueth an utter desolation. For what inhabited city is without candles?

Fourthly, he saith, *No sound of a millstone shall be heard in Rome*: which doth argue an utter desolation. For what city is without mills to grind their corn?

Lastly, he saith, *The voice of the bridegroom, and of the bride, shall be heard no more in Rome*: which argueth an utter desolation. For what city is without bride and bridegroom? and without marriage, for procreation sake?

I conclude from all this, that Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter destruction.

But behold still more plain and powerful proof, drawn from the pitiful mournings, and most woful

lamentations of the kings of the earth, the merchants, and the mariners, who all do jointly lament and mourn for the destruction and desolation of Rome, crying, *Alas! alas! that great city, Babylon, that mighty city: for in one hour is thy judgment come: in one hour so great riches are come to desolation; in one hour she is made desolate.* What can be more plainly and fully spoken, to prove the utter desolation of Rome? What can be more required, than to have it set down in express terms, as here we have it: For now the Holy Ghost useth no figure, no circumlocution, no obscurity; but telleth us plainly, that Babylon, that is Rome, is made desolate; is come to desolation.

Moreover it is said, that *the kings, merchants, and mariners, shall stand afar off for fear of her torment; and they shall weep and wail, when they shall see the smoke of her burning:* signifying, that the torment and plague of Rome shall be so great, that kings, notwithstanding all their might, shall not dare to come nigh to rescue her; no, not the king of Spain, with all his great might and power, he shall be fain to stand afar off, or rather utterly to forsake her, weeping and bewailing, as well as others, for her most fearful and irrecoverable destruction.

But we are to observe in all this, that the Holy Ghost useth a figure of speech, whereby the popish kings, though dead, are brought in, lamenting and bewailing the fall of Babylon, as if they were alive again: or else it may be understood of the cardinals and legates, which are even as kings upon the

earth. But it cannot be understood of Christian kings, for they shall be the instruments of God to pull down great Babylon, as we shall hear hereafter.

Furthermore, let us consider the causes of this great lamentation, made by the popish kings, merchants, and mariners, for the fall of Babylon. *First, the kings* mourn and lament, saith St. John, because they *had committed fornication with the great whore of Babylon, and lived in pleasure with her.* That is, they had lived long with her in abominable idolatry, and pleased her that way; and therefore she gave them dispensations to live in wantonness, and all carnal pleasures, and even to do what they list; spending their days in sensuality and all kinds of wickedness.

Secondly, the merchants do weep and wail because no man buyeth their ware any more. These merchants are not named, but they may easily be known by their wares, which the Holy Ghost describeth to be the popish merchants, the shaven merchants, who are here brought in mourning and lamenting for the loss of their gain. The monks, friars, and priests, cannot have that demand for their goods that they had formerly: their wares are now out of request, and their markets forsaken. When they pass by the great monasteries and abbies, and see them made ruinous heaps, and remember the plentiful revenues, the good entertainment, the pleasure and delight which they sometimes had in those places, it cuts their hearts, and maketh them shake their heads at it, saying, *Alas,*

alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen and purple, and scarlet, and gilded with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, for in one hour so great riches are come to desolation. Mark then, that the ruin of their great city, with all the pomp, pleasure, and riches thereof, is that which doth yet still grieve them.

Thirdly, the mariners do greatly mourn and lament for the loss of their profit and trade: for while Rome had dominion, and the Pope ruled over all, even as a god upon the earth, there was nothing but travelling over the seas to Rome from all lands, and again from thence there was carrying and recarrying; insomuch, that multitudes of mariners and shipmasters were constantly at work, and gained greatly thereby. Do not marvel then that these mariners are brought in among the other friends of Rome bewailing her destruction, even with dust upon their heads, weeping, and crying, and saying, *Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships on the sea, by her costliness: for in one hour she is made desolate.* Thus we see how the kings, and merchants, and mariners, shall bewail the utter ruin and great desolation of Rome, for the loss of their pleasure, their gain, and their profit.

Moreover we are to observe, that that which is spoken by the old prophets, and Jeremiah, as touching the utter desolation of old Babel, is applied by St. John to new Babel, which is Rome. Touching the old eastern Babylon, the prophet saith thus: *Babel, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty and pride of the Chaldeans, shall be as the destruction of God*

in Sodom and Gomorah. It shall not be inhabited for ever, neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there. But Zim shall lodge there, and their houses shall be full of ohim: ostriches shall dwell there, and the satyrs shall dance there: whereby is signified the utter desolation of old Babylon. Now St. John applieth all this to Rome, saying, *Babylon, that great city, is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of all foul spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful birds.* Noting hereby, both the filthiness of Rome, and also her utter desolation.

But now let us proceed to our last and greatest argument, to prove the final fall, and utter destruction of Rome, and all the Romish power and authority. In the nineteenth chapter of this prophecy, our Lord Jesus is described, *sitting upon his white horse*, which is the ministry of the gospel, as hath before been proved, and is most gloriously spoken of, by St. John, as grand captain and general, fighting, with all his army, against Antichrist and his soldiers. St. John giveth him great names and titles, calling him the Word of God, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords: and saith, that he hath a name written that no man knew but himself, which is his infinite glory and majesty.

And moreover, that his eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head many crowns, and a sharp sword in his mouth, and clothed with his warlike garment dipped in blood, and all his heavenly soldiers followed him upon white horses: meaning

thereby, all Christian kings, dukes, lords, nobles, captains, preachers, and professors of true religion.

This grand captain, with all these worthy soldiers, saith St. John, shall prepare themselves to fight against the beast, and the false prophet, and all their forces, and at last he seeth them join battle. *I saw* (saith St. John,) *the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make battle against him that sat upon the white horse, and against his army.* Now all this is to be understood of the battles betwixt the papists and the other powers in these last days. But, perhaps, some man will say, Who shall have the victory? what is the success? what was the issue? Let us hear what the Holy Ghost answereth, that *the beast and the false prophets were taken, foiled, and overcome*: using a warlike phrase; because in the wars they used to take their greatest captains and commanders alive. The like unto this we have in the seventh chapter, where St. John telleth us, that when the popish kings and potentates shall make war against Christ and his gospel, they shall have the like success unto this. For saith he, *These have one mind, and shall give their power and authority unto the beast, they shall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings.*

But, perhaps, some man will say, When the leaders and commanders of the popish armies shall be taken captive, and set at their ransoms, what shall become of the inferior captains and soldiers?

The Holy Ghost answereth, that *the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sitteth upon the white horse*: that is, they were put to the sword, and all the fowls of the air were filled with their flesh. And for this cause St. John saith, that he saw an angel stand in the sun, who cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that did fly by the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God.

Now to make this plain. We know, that they which proclaim any matter, seek some market-cross or high place to stand upon, from which they may be heard; so this angel, which proclaimeth the victory against Antichrist, before any blow be given, because of the certainty of it, standeth in the sun, as it were in the midst of the world, as in a place most fit for the purpose, that he may be heard throughout all the earth. Now this proclamation is directed to all the fowls of the air, to bid them to a supper, which is here called the supper of the great God. But it may be demanded, What food shall they have? The Holy Ghost answereth, that they shall eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of great captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of horsemen; and the flesh of all freemen, and bondmen, and of small and great.

This we know, that when men are slain in great numbers, their bodies lie scattered, as meat for the fowls of the air: and therefore here all fowls are invited and bidden to a great supper, made them by the great God, whose hand is in all this: their food

is to be the flesh of kings and captains, &c. Now from this it may be concluded, that hereafter, when the armies of the Pope, which is the beast, the armies of the king of Spain, who hath given his power and authority unto the beast, and is his great upholder ; when the armies of the cardinal, his great confederate ; when the armies of the leaguers, his great adherents ; yea, when all these, and all other popish armies, shall join and band themselves together against the Christian kings and defenders of the gospel, they shall have a great overthrow, in-somuch, that their dead bodies shall even cover the earth, and the fowls of the air shall come to their great supper, which the Lord of hosts will make ready for them. For, without doubt, they that live shall see the fulfillment of all this ; and shall see the popish armies fall by heaps in all countries and kingdoms, and be made meat for the fowls of the air. For the Holy Ghost saith, *They shall come to Amagedton* ; that is, the place where their armies shall be destroyed. And again, *If any lead into captivity, he shall go into captivity. If any kill with a sword, he must be killed with a sword.* For as the popish forces have in former times taken captive the people of God, and cruelly murdered them ; so now the time draweth on apace, wherein they themselves shall be taken and put to the sword.

And therefore now, at last, I conclude that Rome shall fall finally, and come to utter destruction, in this life. For as Rome did rise up by degrees in this life, so Rome shall fall by degrees in this life ; as Rome grew up to her full height and highest

pitch in this life, so it shall come to her lowest ebb and greatest declination in this life: I mean, before the coming of Christ unto judgment. For the falling down of hail like talents upon the kingdom of the beast, shall be in this life; the extraordinary earthquake in the dominions of Antichrist, shall be in this life; the coming of the popish armies to Armageddon, shall be in this life; the mourning of the kings, merchants, and mariners, for the overthrow of Babylon, shall be in this life; the great battle between the beast and him that sitteth upon the white horse, shall be in this life, before the day of judgment; and the pouring forth of all the seven vials of God's wrath upon the kingdom of the beast, shall be in this life. For it were an absurd thing to say any of these things shall be after this life, or to say that these things shall not be till the very coming of Christ; for they are all things to be effected here in this world; and the Holy Ghost doth describe them as things to be done upon the face of the earth: for we could have small comfort in any of these things, if they are not done here on earth, or if they should all be deferred till the very coming of Christ, and in the meantime Antichrist should still prevail.

But it will be objected that St. Paul saith, The Lord shall consume Antichrist with the spirit of his mouth, and abolish him with the brightness of his coming: therefore before his coming he shall not be utterly abolished. True it is, indeed, he shall not utterly be cut off in all his members, till the very coming of Christ: for there will be some

Papists remaining in all countries, even unto the end; there are some, nay many, that will carry the beast's mark even till the last day. But the Holy Ghost, in this prophecy, speaketh of the revolting and falling away of kingdoms and countries from the see of Rome; whereby it shall come to pass, that it shall be exceedingly weakened, and brought so low, that the kings of the earth shall easily take it; or, as the Holy Ghost speaketh, shall easily pass over, their Euphrates being dried up, and enter their Babylon. But then will some man say, Shall there be no Pope at all a little before the coming of Christ? I answer, he shall be a poor Pope, a naked Pope, a desolate Pope, a Pope whose flesh shall be torn, whose flesh shall wither, as we shall hear hereafter. He shall be such a Pope as Ishbosheth was a king, when Abner, and all Israel, fell away from him. He shall be a Pope without power or influence.

But it will be objected, How know you this? are you a prophet? can you foretel of things to come? I answer, St. John was a prophet, and endued with a prophetic spirit when writing his visions and revelations; and I speak no more than St. John hath set down. And therefore I hope I speak within compass, for I do but relate St. John's words, and explain them in the best way that I am able.

This prophecy doth plainly declare, that Babylon shall fall; Rome shall come down; the Pope shall never be esteemed again. And I do believe it to be so; I believe God; I believe his word; I believe all that is spoken in the scriptures; and I do endeavour

to persuade others also. For since the Holy Ghost hath so plainly and so fully foretold it, why should we not believe it? why are we so slow to believe all that is written in the scriptures? hath God spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? shall an iota of his word fail? shall we think he jesteth with us, when he doth so often and so seriously tell us of the downfall of Rome? Surely, surely, the cause why men are not fully persuaded of the final fall of Rome is, because they do not diligently peruse this book of the Revelation. But let them be studious and diligent in this book, and they shall be out of all doubt that Rome is the great whore of Babylon; that the Pope is Antichrist; and the papacy the beast.

But now me thinketh I hear some man say, How is it likely that Popery shall fall down more and more, since it hath so many friends and upholders, and seemeth to gather strength and make head again? I answer, that all is but a slight revival before death. I answer, that all is but the stopping of a water-brook, or making a dam across it, which will cause it to swell more, and to break over with great violence. I answer, that all is no more than is foretold; that the jesuits shall come forth like frogs out of their marshy grounds, and croaking for a time, till they have completed their own destruction, and many others. For they shall never re-establish Popery in England. I must needs confess, that our sins being so horrible and aggravated as they are, and grown to such an height, do deserve some fearful vengeance, and that God hath a just cause to be angry with us, as sometimes he had against Israel,

because *there was no mercy, nor truth, nor knowledge of God in the land; but swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and whoring, and blood toucheth blood, and therefore saith God, The land shall mourn, &c.* But yet I hope, for his covenant sake, and for his great mercy's sake, for his name's sake, for his glory's sake, and for his Church's sake, he will be gracious and favourable unto us, and not bring us that vengeance which our sins have deserved, or at least, though he correct us, as indeed he hath just cause, and we may justly fear it, yet he will do it in mercy for our amendment, and not in wrath to our destruction; as he saith, by his prophet, *I will not utterly destroy thee, but I will correct thee by judgment, and not utterly cut thee off.*

But howsoever it shall please the most wise God to deal with us, yet this I say, and am persuaded of, that Popery shall never be established again in this kingdom: my reason is, because the everlasting gospel, carried abroad by the angel that flyeth in the midst of heaven, shall spread still more and more throughout all the kingdoms of Europe, as appeareth in chap. xiv. 6. for otherwise how shall Rome fall? how shall the Jews ever be converted? how shall fire come down from heaven, and devour both Gog and Magog? as the Holy Ghost foretelleth shall come to pass; and as we shall hear more of hereafter.

Moreover, St. John telleth us plainly, that *in these last days the gospel shall be preached to many people, and nations, and tongues, and to many kings.* And further he saith, that in this age wherein we live

many shall renounce idolatry, *repent, and give glory to the God of heaven.* But some man may say, How prove you that this kingdom is one of them which St. John speaketh of, and which he meaneth, wherein the gospel shall be preached unto the end of the world? I answer, that it is proved from the seventeenth chapter of this prophecy; where the Holy Ghost telleth us flatly, that those ten kingdoms of Europe, which had a long time been *the ten horns and strength of the beast, and being of one mind, had given their power and authority unto the beast, shall now in these last days rise up against the whore of Babylon, make war against her, hate her, and make her desolate.*

But this kingdom is one of those ten horns, and one of those ten kingdoms, which a long time had given her power and authority to the beast. Therefore as this kingdom hath happily begun to hate the whore, and to make her desolate, so undoubtedly she shall continue unto the end of the world. For if this kingdom, and other kingdoms which now hate the whore, do not continue, how shall she be made desolate &c.? Then it would seem as if the beast were to revive and recover himself again, and St. John be found a false prophet. But *God is true, and all men are liars*; and St. John shall be a true prophet: and therefore these kingdoms of Europe which have begun to hate the whore, shall continue, and never give her over, till, as the Holy Ghost saith, *they have eaten her flesh, and burnt her with fire*; that is, till they have utterly devoured her. But here it will be objected, that in the latter days

iniquity shall have the upper hand. I answer, first, that I find no such thing in the scripture. But this I find, that our Lord Jesus telleth his disciples, that very shortly after his death and resurrection many seducers and false teachers should arise, which should deceive many, and draw them away from the love of the gospel; and saith he, *Because iniquity shall be increased, the love of many shall be cold.*

But this speech of our Saviour doth not properly concern our times. But yet it must needs be granted, that the wicked shall wax worse and worse, and the world shall not amend, but still get worse and worse, and grow to a greater height of sin, as appeareth in this prophecy. Yet, for all this, we must note, that the number of true believers in those days shall be very many, as this book doth also teach. But it may be objected, How can this be, that in the last days there shall be multitudes and millions of reprobates, and most wicked and abominable persons, and yet withal a great increase of true believers? I answer, that the world will be always like itself, impious, and unbelieving. But the Church shall purely worship God, and that with daily increasing even unto the end. But now me thinketh I hear some man say, What likelihood is there of all this which you write touching the overthrow of Rome? do we not see that Rome is yet strong? doth not Italy, Spain, the greatest part of France, the Netherlands, and Germany, stand up for her defence? hath not the whore still many and great supporters? what likelihood is there then

that ever she shall be brought so low as you speak of? I answer, that in this case we must not ask the question, What likelihood? We must not consult with flesh and blood; we must not take counsel of human reason: for God is marvellous in his devices; and when he hath once decreed and determined upon any future event, he will compass it by means far surpassing all human reach and capacity; yea, by such means as man could not have thought of. For he hath all the means in heaven and earth in his hands, and is wonderful in all his ways; and therefore we may not ask the question, What likelihood, or how can it be, or how can it possibly come to pass? What likelihood was there an hundred years past, when Rome was in the height of her glory, and all the kingdoms of Europe stood by her, that ever she should have been forsaken by so many of her old friends, as at this day she is? what likelihood was there, that when the Pope could command the emperor, and all the kings of Europe and their kingdoms, that ever he should have been brought so low as at this day he is, God be thanked? what likelihood was there that ever poor Martin Luther should stand out, with the everlasting gospel in his mouth, against the Pope, the emperor, and, as it were, the whole world, and yet die in his bed in a good old age? what likelihood was there that king Henry the eighth, of famous memory, should renounce Rome, oppose himself against the Pope, and suppress the abbies priories, and monasteries in this kingdom, and take their lands and livings into his own hands? Therefore I conclude, that

when God hath decreed the utter overthrow of Rome, we must not ask this question, How can it be? or which way shall it be brought about? For the scripture doth teach, that God, in all ages, hath brought to pass the greatest events, either by himself alone, without means, or else by weak means, or contrary to all means.

By himself, without means, he overthrew the Moabites, Ammonites, and them of Mount Seir, which made war against king Jehosaphat, 1 Chron. x.

By himself he destroyed Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, Exod. xiv.

By himself he overthrew Jericho, that great city, Josh. vi.

By himself he slew the huge army of the Assyrians, that made war against Hezekiah, 2 Kings xix.

By himself he smote the great and dreadful army of the Ethiopians before Asia, and before Judah, 1 Chron. xiv.

By himself he smote the Syrians which besieged Dothan, the city where the prophet Elisha was, 2 Kings vi.

By weak means he overthrew the innumerable army of the Midianites, even by Gideon's three hundred, Judges vii.

By weak means he slew a garrison of the Philistines, even by Jonathan and his armour-bearer, 1 Sam. xiv.

By weak means he overthrew the kings of Sodom and thereabouts, even by Abraham and his family, Gen. xiv.

He overthrew Goliath, by David; Sisera, by Jael; Ahimelech, by a woman; 1 Sam. xvii. Judges iv. vi.

Contrary to means, he saved the three children from burning, being in the fire, Dan. iii

Contrary to means, he saved Jonas from drowning, being cast into the sea, Jonas iii.

Contrary to means, he preserved Daniel from being devoured, being cast into the lions' den, Dan. vi

Contrary to means, he kept the Israelites from drowning, being in the bottom of the sea, Exod. xiv.

Contrary to means, and to all expectation, he caused the sun to stand still at noon-day, while he overthrew the five kings of Canaan, by Joshua, Josh. x.

Therefore I conclude, that because God, in all ages, hath effected the most strange and admirable things, either by himself, without means, or by very weak means, or contrary to all means, it is in vain to ask this question, How, or by what means shall Rome be destroyed? for it is enough for us to know that it shall be destroyed, and come to utter desolation. And, in my judgment, the Holy Ghost hath so often and plainly affirmed this, that no man should any more make any doubt of it, or once call it into question. For what can be more plain than to say, *Rome is fallen. Rome shall fall. Great hailstones like talents shall fall upon it. It shall go to perdition. It shall fall to destruction. It shall be cast down like a great millstone into the bottom of the sea. It shall be burnt with fire. It shall be made desolate and naked. It shall be without inhabitants.* All the Papists, both high and low,

shall with great mourning and lamentation bewail the desolation thereof. Their armies shall come to Armageddon. The beast and the false prophet shall be taken, and their captains and soldiers slain by infinite heaps, and their carcasses made meat for the fowls of the air. All these predictions are to be found in the Revelations, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth chapter.

If all this be not plain enough, I cannot tell what can be plain enough. True it is, indeed, the Holy Ghost doth not name Rome ; but it is apparent by the circumstances, that all these passages must be understood to refer to Rome, to Romish power, and to the Romish armies: for there can be no other sound explanation given of them, as all the scripture writers, and interpreters of them, do affirm, both new and old. And therefore I conclude, that St. John, in this prophecy, could not speak more plainly, except he should have named Rome. For he nameth Babylon ; he nameth *the great city which then reigned over the kings of the earth* ; he nameth *the city situate upon seven hills* ; he nameth *the city which had seven several governments* ; and therefore, beyond all doubt, he meaneth Rome. Well then since it is so, that Rome, and all Romish power and authority, shall fall, and come to utter destruction and desolation in this life, let all men take heed how they join with Rome, how they join with the Romish Church, and how they receive the beast's mark ; for assuredly they shall be destroyed together, both in this life and in that which is to come, as we shall hear by and by.

Let all the wise men, therefore, and all such as have any care of their salvation, follow the counsel and advice of the Holy Ghost, which saith, *Go out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins are come up to heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.* Our only wisdom then will be, to separate ourselves from the whore of Babylon, that is, from the Church of Rome, and to join ourselves with all speed to the Church of God, that is, the Church of the Protestants: for this shall stand and flourish; the other shall fall down and perish.

But what then, shall we be sorry for the fall of Babylon, and the ruin of Rome? No. The Holy Ghost counselleth us greatly to rejoice in her destruction and overthrow, saying, *O heavens, rejoice over her, and ye holy apostles and prophets, because God hath given you judgment on her.* We are therefore to be so far from mourning and lamenting for the desolation of Rome, the kings, merchants, mariners, and other her friends, as that we are to rejoice greatly at it. For St. John saith, that not only the holy angels, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, shall rejoice at the destruction of Rome; but also all the saints, and the whole body of the Church. And therefore he saith, that after the utter overthrow of Rome, *he heard a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah! that is, Praise ye the Lord! for he hath condemned the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servant, shed by her hand.* And again, saith St. John,

they said, *Hallelujah! hallelujah! hallelujah!* thrice together: thereby expressing their great joy and thanksgiving for the destruction and overthrow of the great whore: and even so ought all that love God, that love the Church, and that love the truth, greatly to rejoice in the destruction of Rome, because it can no longer oppress the Israel of God. And certain it is, that the more zealous and godly a man is, the more he will rejoice at the destruction of Popery: for a man cannot love God and his Church, that doth not feel joy at the destruction of that Antichristian and bloody kingdom. Let no man here say, this is cruelty, this is want of charity, and want of pity, to rejoice at her destruction, or to rejoice at other men's misfortunes. For the most wise God saith, *Reward her even as she rewarded you, and give her double, according to her works, and in the cup which she hath filled to you, fill her the double. Inasmuch as she glorified herself, and lived in pleasure, so much give ye to her torment and sorrow.* And therefore I affirm, that no man ought to be moved with any compassion or pity for the overthrow of Rome. But herein that saying of the prophet is true, *Blessed is he that taketh and dasheth her children against the stone.* And again, *Bend thy bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the Lord.*

Moreover we are to observe, that forasmuch as the Lord willeth and commandeth all men to reward Rome as she hath rewarded us, and to give her double according to her works: therefore every one ought as much as in him lieth, and as his situ-

ation will enable him, to do his utmost to pull down Rome; the magistrate by the sword, the minister by the word, and the people by their prayers. For even Christian kings and princes, and all the nobles of the earth, must not neglect to fight against Rome. For herein that saying is true, *Cursed is he that doth the word of the Lord negligently; and cursed is he that keepeth back his sword from blood.* And therefore I do upon my knees, night and day, most humbly and constantly entreat the great God of heaven, that as he hath put it into the heart of our most gracious and excellent king to hate the whore of Babylon, and to be his greatest instrument in the whole world for the weakening and overturning of Rome, and defence of his most glorious gospel, (which is his crown and glory in all the Churches, and his great renown in all Christian kingdoms,) so he may constantly continue to oppose the wickedness of those who would introduce again the persecuting spirit of Popery, and to exert himself in the support of the truth. And here I also do most humbly, even upon my knees, with dropping tears, yea, if it were possible, with tears of blood, beseech and entreat the learned and reverend fathers of our Church, to use all their power and authority in the same cause; and the rather, because in these days Popery seemeth to make head again, having so many and great favourers, that she and her accomplices dare raise their heads, and very boldly and confidently talk of emancipation.

Here also I do most humbly and earnestly entreat
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an. my learned and godly brethren, the ministers and preachers of this Church of England, that in all heir public teachings, and private instructions, they would make strong opposition against Rome, and the Romish religion. And I beseech the God of gods, that we may all join together, with united forces, to march on valiantly against the armies of Antichrist, and to spread the everlasting gospel far and near, to the utter overturning and beating down of the western Babylon; and that howsoever we may ourselves differ in judgment in some things, there may be no breach of love, or alienation of affection, among us; but that we may all go together hand-in-hand, and arm-in-arm, to preach God's everlasting truth, and to set ourselves against the common adversaries. For if we will not set ourselves against them, they will be sure to set themselves against us. And thus much concerning the third main point, which is the final fall and destruction of Rome, even in this world.

Now it followeth to speak of the fourth main point, which is, by whom, and when Rome shall be overthrown. But for the better understanding of this point, concerning the persons that shall overthrow Rome, we are to observe, that St. John describeth the whore of Babylon, *sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, having seven heads, and ten horns*; whereby is meant the Roman monarchy, as hath been shewn before. After this the angel expoundeth unto John what the heads and horns of the beast mean; and saith, *that the ten horns are ten kings, or ten kingdoms, which have not yet received a kingdom,*

but shall receive power as kings at an hour with the beast.

The sense is, that these ten kingdoms had not received such power and authority under the emperors as they should under the Popes; for there was a great difference between what these kingdoms were under the popes, and what they had been under the emperors. For they received far greater power, and did submit themselves to the Papacy for conscience and love, even as to the holy Church, which they never did to the empire.

And this is the reason why the Holy Ghost saith, *They had not received a kingdom, but should receive power as kings, at one hour with the beast.* Which is not to be understood simply, but literally; for they had received power under the emperors, though not like that which they afterwards received under the Popes. For the Roman monarchy, under the dominion of the Popes, was in its greatest height and altitude; and the kings of Europe grew up, together with the Papacy, in power, might, and dominion. And St. John addeth, that *these ten kings, or kingdoms, were all of one mind, and did give their power and authority unto the beast*; that is, they did all in their power to support her. But the angel telleth John plainly, that the ten horns, that is, the ten kingdoms of the empire, which before had given their names, their power, and authority, to the beast, to uphold her, and defend her, should now, in these last days, all change their minds, and turn against her. For saith the angel to John, *The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, are they which*

shall hate the whore, and make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

Here then it doth plainly appear who they are that shall overthrow Rome, and by whom it shall be destroyed: to wit, by the ten kings of Europe, or kingdoms of Europe, which some very learned do reckon up to be these, England, Scotland, Germany, France, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Russia, and Hungary.

St. John's words are plain, that these kingdoms which took part with the beast shall turn against her, and pull her down. But we know that all the kingdoms of Europe did take part with her, therefore it followeth that all the kingdoms of Europe shall take part against her. And therefore it is very probable, that in time France, Spain, and Italy shall turn against the beast. We know that the rest of the kingdoms are already turned against the beast; and the beast hath lost seven of his horns; the eighth, which is France, beginneth to shake, which if it fall off, the rest will follow after apace.

The reason why the kingdoms, which were subject to the Roman empire, are compared to horns, is, because that as horns are the strength and defence of a beast, wherewith also he pusheth down other creatures, so the strength and defence of the Roman empire, and the Papacy, was in the kingdoms which were subject unto them, and took part with them; whereby also they did mightily push at other nations and kingdoms. Moreover we are to

observe, that whereas St. John saith, the same horns which did uphold and defend the whore, shall pull her down; it is not to be understood of the same men, but of their successors in the same kingdoms. For the kings of England, Scotland, Denmark, Poland, and other countries which gave their power and authority unto the beast, are dead and gone. If it refers to the persons of men, those which succeed them now in these kingdoms, and pull down the whore, are other persons; but because they succeed and govern in these kingdoms, they are said to be those ten horns of the beast.

Thus then it is, these ten kings, which now hate the harlot, are called the ten horns of the beast; not because they are any defence and strength unto him, but because they sit upon the same thrones as their ancestors, which did uphold and maintain him. But this one thing is very clear and apparent out of the interpretation of the angel, that the same kingdoms which have maintained Popery, shall put it down, as we see already fulfilled in England, Scotland, Denmark, and the rest which have embraced the gospel. And it is very likely, that the other kingdoms which as yet have not embraced the gospel, shall in God's good time embrace it. For this seemeth unto me to be a very good argument, taken from the words of the interpreting angel. Those ten kingdoms which have upheld Rome, shall pull down Rome; but France, Spain, and Italy, have upheld, and do uphold, Rome. Therefore France, Spain, and Italy shall pull down Rome. To this may be added, for confirmation, that *the*

everlasting gospel shall be preached in these last days to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Which I understand of all the nations of Europe, which were subject to the Roman empire and the papacy.

And further the Holy Ghost saith, that the preachers of the gospel, from Luther's time, shall publish God's truth among people, and nations, and tongues, and many kings; which I understand as before stated.

I am not ignorant that some good divines are doubtful whether Rome shall be overthrown by the kings of Europe only, or by the Turk also and the kings of the east. For mine own part, I dare not fully determine, it being a thing to come; but the event shall declare it, and they that live shall one day see it. It may be the Turk and the eastern princes may have some share in its destruction: for the Roman monarchy did stretch far that way, when it was in its highest elevation. But that which is alleged of *the drying up of the waters of Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared*, proveth nothing; because it is an allusion to Darius and Cyrus, which were kings of the east, and took old Babylon, by drying up the waters of Euphrates, and leading over their armies, as we have heard before. I do therefore conclude that the Turks and the eastern kings may have some share in this work. But it seemeth most probable unto me, that the kings of Europe shall be the greatest agents in this action. For the words are plain, that the kings of the earth, which sometimes

were subject to that monstrous beast, should now at last shake off the yoke of her servitude, and withdraw the obedience of their subjects from her, *and should hate and abhor the harlot of Rome, and should make her desolate*, by withdrawing their subjects from her obedience; *and naked*, by spoiling her of her treasures; *and shall eat her flesh, and tear her in pieces*, for pure hatred; *and burn her with fire*; that is, bring her to utter destruction.

So that she which before, at her pleasure, might command all princes to begin war, to cease from war, to defend her quarrels, and to annoy her enemies, is now glad to flatter a few seduced princes to take her part, that she may not be utterly forsaken by all. Or else, by treason and treachery, to stir up tumults among the people, and to trouble godly estates and commonwealths, that despise her dominion, but assuredly without hope ever to recover her ancient tyranny. But here it may be objected, that the preaching of the gospel is the greatest and strongest means to overthrow Babylon; and therefore how can it be done by the Christian princes? I answer, that it is true indeed, that of all other means the gospel is the strongest. But the thing is this: first, the gospel being preached, shall detect and discover the whore of Rome, and all her abominable doctrines, which the Christian princes espying, shall renounce her, make war upon her, and slay in the field thousands of her soldiers; as we heard before. So much concerning the persons that shall overthrow Rome.

Now it followeth to speak of the time when it

shall be destroyed; which, of all the rest, is a thing most hard to be decided. For the Holy Ghost saith, *Why should not the times be hid of the Almighty: so as they which know him, should not foresee the times appointed of him?* And again, *The words are closed and sealed up, until the time determined* And again, *It is not for you to know the times or the season, which the Father hath put in his own power.* Yet, even in this point, I will, by God's assistance, set down so much as is revealed, and so much as God hath given me to see. First, I do confess that God in his word hath set down, for the comfort of his Church, the just period, and precise determination, of the greatest afflictions and persecutions that ever befel it, before the coming of his Son in the flesh; as that of Egypt, after the expiration of four hundred and thirty years; that of Babylon, after the date of seventy years; that of the Medes and Persians, after the determination of an hundred and thirty years; that of Alexander's state, after six years; that of Magog and Egypt, after two hundred and forty-nine years. So likewise that of Christ's death and resurrection, after seventy sevens, or seventy weeks, which make four hundred and ninety years, as the angel Gabriel foretold unto the prophet Daniel. But concerning the just period and precise determination of the persecutions of the Church since Christ, by the Roman empire and the Papacy, we find nothing so explicit; and for which there may be two reasons given: first, because the Church of the Jews was not under such clear and precious promises as we are, therefore it was need-

ful, for the better strengthening of their hope and comfort in afflictions, that they should know the very time determined: but because the Church of the Christians liveth under the most clear and comfortable promises of deliverance, therefore God, according to his deep wisdom, would have our faith exercised in an assured expectation of the accomplishment thereof, though the precise time be concealed. Another reason may be this, the utter overthrow of Rome falleth out to be but a little before the coming of Christ to judgment, as appeareth in this prophecy. Now if we knew the day or year certainly, when Rome should fall finally, it would give us too much light unto the knowledge of the last day, which God, in his great wisdom, hath hid from the knowledge of all men, yea, and of angels. I know well, that a certain learned writer doth precisely determine the utter destruction of Rome to fall out in the year of our Lord 1639. But, with deference to so excellent a man be it spoken, I see no sufficient ground thereof. But, as touching the time of Rome's final fall, I will deliver my opinion, and my reasons, submitting myself to the judgment of the learned: for I would be loath, in this or any other thing, to go beyond my place, or pass the bounds of modesty and humility, and do therefore refer all to be tried by the test of the scriptures.

I do therefore thus judge, that the utter overthrow of Rome shall be in this age; I mean within the age of man: my reason is this, we of this age live under the opening of the seventh seal, the blowing of the sixth trumpet, and the pouring forth of the sixth.

vial. For the first it is manifest, because the opening of the seventh seal containeth all things that shall fall out to the end of the world, as hath been proved and shewn before. The blowing of the sixth trumpet also is plain ; because, under the blowing thereof the little book was opened, and the gospel preached, as we see in this age. The pouring down of the sixth vial of God's wrath also is most clear, because thereupon the great river Euphrates drieth up, and the emissaries of the Pope are sent out to solicit the kings of the earth to battle against the Church, as we see fulfilled in these our days. Then I reason thus, Rome must fall down finally in that age wherein the little book is opened, and the everlasting gospel preached : in this age the little book is opened, and the everlasting gospel preached ; therefore in this age Rome must fall down finally. And again I reason thus : Rome must fall down finally in that age wherein the river Euphrates drieth up, that is, in which the temporal power of Rome is broken : all of which falleth out in this age, as we *clearly perceive*. Therefore in this age Rome shall finally fall.

Moreover, this I say, when the seventh angel bloweth the seventh trumpet, then cometh the end of the world. But the sixth angel hath sounded the sixth trumpet long ago, as appeareth by the effects ; therefore it cannot be long ere the seventh angel blow. But Rome must fall finally before the seventh angel sounds the trumpet, as hath been shewn before. Therefore the utter fall of Rome cannot be long deferred.

I do not determine either on day, month, or year, because it is not revealed: but I guess at the time, because the Holy Ghost pointeth unto the agent.

But all these things I set down for the comfort of God's Church, not desiring to understand above that which it is mete to understand; but to understand according to sobriety.

Now it resteth to speak of the last main point, which is, the causes of Rome's utter ruin and overthrow, which are set down four several times: first, because *she made all nations drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

They which outwardly make others drunk, or commit fornication with others, are worthy to be severely punished. How much sorer punishment are they worthy of, which do the same spiritually and therefore wo be to Rome.

Another cause of the destruction of Rome is, that she hath shed the blood of all the prophets, martyrs, and saints; as it is written, *In thee was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.* What punishment is he worthy to receive, that is a most cruel blood-sucker? what is he worthy to have, that murders a King's children; yea, that murders his eldest Son, and heir-apparent to the crown?

But Rome hath murdered thousands of the King of heaven's children: yea, Rome hath murdered the very Son of God. For Christ was put to death by the Roman power and authority, and by a Roman judge, as before hath been shewed. Therefore let all men judge what Rome is worthy to have.

Moreover, St. John telleth us, that Rome, *with her enchantments, hath deceived all nations.* Then let the matter be referred to the judgment of any impartial man, to determine and set down what punishment sorcerers and enchanters are worthy of; especially spiritual sorcerers and enchanters. Besides all this, the Holy Ghost saith, that *Rome is the habitation of the devils, and the hold of all foul spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.* What think you is likely to become of an habitation of devils? what think ye will be the end of a place that is full of all kinds of wickedness? and to what place is this description so applicable as it is to Rome? For has not she been guilty of every kind of wickedness? Has she not constantly been the author and encourager of seditions, perjuries, murders, conspiracies, treacheries, and all manner of villainies? If I had no other reason to persuade me that Rome shall fall, and come to a miserable end, this alone would make me so to think, that her ministers do teach in their Churches that it is not only lawful, but also meritorious, to murder any Christian prince that is not of their Catholic religion. Have they not employed divers wicked men to embrue their hands in the blood of Christian princes? How many have been their plots, how desperate have been their practices, to murder and poison our late queen Elizabeth, the French king, and our most gracious and late sovereign king James, and other Christian princes? But can such proceedings prosper? can such courses be blessed? can a man be established by iniquity?

No, no; let them know, for a certainty, that God will cross and curse all such devilish proceedings, as hitherto he hath done, his most holy name be praised.

But if any man would know more of the proceedings and practices of jesuits, let him read Doctor Sutcliffe's answer to Parson's Wardword, a book worthy to be read and known by all men.

But to come to a conclusion upon this point, and to wind up together all the reasons and causes of Rome's ruin, thus do I conclude: that forasmuch as Rome is the great whore *with whom have committed fornication all the kings of the earth*; forasmuch as Rome *hath made all nations drunk with her fornication*; forasmuch as Rome *hath deceived all nations with her enchantments*; forasmuch as Rome *is a den of devils, and a cage of unclean birds*; forasmuch as Rome *hath shed the blood of the apostles, martyrs, and saints*; forasmuch as Rome *hath murdered the Son of God*. Therefore it shall at last come to most miserable destruction, being that Chittim which in the end must needs perish; for what punishment, what pain, what torture, what torment, can be enough for one that hath committed such execrable and most outrageous villainies? Be it therefore known unto all men, that Rome, for all her monstrous and prodigious sins, shall fall still more and more, and come to a fearful destruction, even in this life. But some man may say, What shall become of Rome, and of all her friends, after this life? St. John answereth, *That if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or on*

his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and shall be tormented in fire and brimstone, before the holy angels, and before the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment shall ascend, and they shall have no rest day nor night, which worship the beast, &c. Here is a sentence of eternal damnation passed upon all the friends of Rome. O that all Papists would consider this in time, and think within themselves what a woful thing it is to be a Papist, for they and their kingdom must go down in this life, and in the life to come they must be tormented in hell-fire for ever. For St. John saith plainly, that all Papists *shall be cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, where they shall be strained and tried till blood come out of the wine-press unto the horses bridles, for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.* And again he saith, *that the beast and the false prophet were taken alive, and cast into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.*

Let all men, therefore, take heed how they join with the Papists, for we see what shall be their end, both in this life and the life to come. Therefore let all God's people come out of Babylon, and hasten out of Sodom, lest they be included in their judgments. . Let all wise men practise the policy of the Gibeonites; who, when they saw that Joshua did so mightily prevail against the Canaanites, and bear down all before him, did very wisely provide for their own safety, and enter into league with Joshua and the Israel of God. So let all that have any care of their own salvation, speedily forsake Baby-

lon, which otherwise will fall upon their heads, and fly to Zion, which shall stand for evermore.

Having said thus much upon the nineteenth, and four preceding chapters, and having explained and expounded what appeared to be of any moment or difficulty, I shall proceed to the twentieth.

CHAP. XX.

St. John having in the former chapters plainly and plentifully set down the utter overthrow both of the beast and false prophet, that is, the Roman empire and the Papacy, doth now in this chapter set forth the condemnation of the dragon, their grand captain, which set them all at work. For there hath as yet been no mention of him, which hath been the beginner and raiser up of the rest, and the great worker of all mischief; therefore now cometh his judgment and condemnation; and because he hath been a more general worker, and his mischiefs hath extended larger than the kingdom of Antichrist, there is in this twentieth chapter an history of him set forth by itself.

First, how he seduced the nations before the coming of Christ: afterward, how Christ, at his coming, bound him, by the light of his gospel, from seducing the nations; and so holdeth him in prison for the space of a thousand years, in which the Church flourished greatly, and many were raised up unto the spiritual life. But when the thousand years were expired, Satan was let loose, and went

forth again to seduce, and, by the great Antichrist and the Turk, gathered innumerable multitudes into his armies, to fight against the Church; which armies are called Gog and Magog.

But they are all overcome and destroyed; and together with his instruments, the beast and the false prophet, is cast into hell-fire, to be tormented for ever. And this is the sum and principal drift of this chapter.

It containeth five principal things, as it were five parts thereof.

The first is, the binding and chaining up of Satan, by our Lord Jesus, for the space of a thousand years.

The second is, the flourishing of the Church during the time of Satan's captivity.

The third is, the loosing of Satan, after the thousand years expired, and the woful effects thereof.

The fourth is, the casting of the Devil into a lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet were.

The fifth is, a glorious description of the last judgment, wherein every man shall be judged according to his works.

The text.---*And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and*



SATAN BOUND FOR 1000 YEARS



after that he must be loosed a little season, Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3.

This angel here spoken of, is our Lord Jesus, who is therefore said to have the key of the bottomless pit, because he hath power and authority over hell and death, as we have heard before.

By the chain in his hand, is meant the doctrine of the gospel.

The time when Satan was thus taken and bound, was when Christ first preached the gospel, and his apostles after him, to all nations.

The cause why he was bound and chained up, was, that he had a long time seduced all nations, and reigned as king and lord over the Gentiles, and greatly seduced the Jews also.

The time of his imprisonment is set down to be a thousand years; that is, all the time from the preaching of Christ and his apostles until Gregory the Seventh and other Popes, which did let Satan loose again. Which space of time is guessed by the learned to be a thousand years, or thereabouts. But here it is to be observed, that this binding of Satan is not to be taken simply and absolutely, as though Satan was so bound and chained up for this thousand years, that he could not seduce at all, or do any mischief at all, after the preaching of the gospel by Christ and his apostles. I say this is not to be understood simply, but means that he could not so generally and universally seduce all nations, as he had in former time, before the coming of Christ. For otherwise it is well known, that even after Christ's time, he did greatly persecute the

Church, bringing in many errors and heresies, and blinding many men's hearts : but yet all this was nothing in comparison of that which he had wrought in former ages, when he was, as it were, the god of the world, and the Gentiles worshipped him as God, as the apostle teacheth, *That all the worship of the heathen nations was the worship of devils.* And again, *That God, in times past, suffered the nations to walk in their own ways.* And then was Satan a great prince indeed. But now cometh a chain for him : for Christ preacheth the gospel, and sendeth forth his disciples with power ; and therefore saith, *I saw Satan fall down like lightning :* for the preaching of the gospel beateth down the kingdom of Satan and of sin.

Moreover it is to be noted, that notwithstanding all Satan's power and might, craft and subtilty, yet this angel which hath the key of the bottomless pit shut him up, and sealed the door upon him, so that he cannot get abroad to seduce so generally, as in former time.

But St. John saith, that *after a thousand years he must be loosed for a little season ;* that is, the time wherein the great Antichrist should bear the sway. For the gospel did prevail, in some measure, in the world a thousand years after Christ ; and the principles and grounds of true religion continued in the Church until the full loosing of Satan, though with many corruptions and abuses. For after the first six hundred years, the clear sincerity of the truth was much dimmed with errors and heresies, though the main ground did remain till the full expiration

of the thousand years. Now we know that the gospel hath been preached, in these last seven days, above threescore years : therefore it followeth, that the strength of Popery continued not much above five hundred years. Which here the Holy Ghost, for our comfort, calleth a little season ; of which we have heard before, and therefore I do here omit it.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years : But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years, Rev. xx. 4, 5, 6.

Here now is set forth the state of the Church militant, for the space of the thousand years wherein Satan was chained up. For it is said here, that the Church did grow and flourish, yea, and greatly exercised her power authority, during that time. And therefore St. John saith, that *he saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.* Whereby he meaneth, that the apostles, and their successors, had their chairs, seats, and consistories, wherein they did both preach the word,

and execute the Church's censures ; as the Scribes and Pharisees before had set in the chair of Moses : and I take it, the latter part of the fourth verse is to be referred to the first clause, to wit, that *the Church did live and reign with Christ a thousand years*. Which is not to be understood as referring to the Church triumphant, as some understand it, and all the rest of the fourth verse, but to the flourishing state of the Church militant during the time of Satan's captivity. For all the faithful do, in one sense, live and reign with Christ, even here on the earth, when they overcome the world by faith, and subdue Satan and sin by the power of grace.

Now where it is said, that *John saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, &c.* it is to be understood of those which, in the time of the persecuting empire, and growing of the Papacy, were slain for the truth. For the second beast, which is the dominion of the Popes, reigned not in those thousand years, in which Satan was bound, but yet did grow by degrees towards its height, and used great tyranny against the servants of God, before Satan's full loosing.

The Chiliasts, or Milinaries, do fondly gather from this scripture, that after the overthrow of Antichrist the Lord Jesus will come and reign with the faithful here a thousand years upon the earth ; and that in the time that Christ does so reign, as a great and glorious king upon the earth, his subjects shall enjoy all manner of earthly pleasures and delights. This foolish error is confuted by the words that follow in the text, as we shall see afterward.

Where he saith, *the rest of the dead shall not live again*; it is to be understood of such as were spiritually dead, that is, such as despised the gospel, which was preached those thousand years, and were not thereby revived and quickened unto eternal life, but did still remain as men dead in sins and trespasses.

Therefore the meaning of St. John is, that as in the thousand years many that heard Christ and his apostles, and their successors, were raised up from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, so many others were not quickened by their doctrine, but still dwelt in their sins, whom he calleth *the rest of the dead*: and he saith, *these shall not live again*; meaning the life of God, or the life of grace: and where he addeth, *until the thousand years be finished*, he meaneth never, or not at all; for so the word *until* is often taken in the scriptures: and it is certain, that after the expiration of the thousand years they did not live the life of God, and the life of the Spirit. For then the Devil was let loose upon the world, to work his pleasure, and to seduce with all efficacy of error and iniquity.

Where it is said, *This is the first resurrection*, he meaneth the rising from sin to the life of righteousness, which was in the thousand years of the gospel's preaching; and therefore he addeth, *that he is blessed that hath part in the first resurrection, &c.* and saith, that *all such shall reign with Christ a thousand years*. By which is meant, of the reign of the faithful upon the earth, for the space of that thou-

sand years, in which Satan was bound : but yet excludeth not their eternal glory in the heavens.

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out and deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle : the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city : and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them, Rev. xx. 7, 8, 9.

Now St. John telleth us, that at the termination of a thousand years Satan should be let loose upon the world, for its unthankfulness and contempt of the gospel, to seduce and deceive even as much as ever he did. Marvel not, therefore, that the two great and monstrous heresies of Popery and Mahometanism, did now begin mightily to grow and increase in the world : for what other thing can be looked for, after this letting loose of Satan ?

But we are to observe, that as Satan was bound by degrees, through the ministry of Christ, and his apostles, and their immediate successors, so also he was loosed by degrees, by the prevailing of heresies, till the great Antichrist arose, and came into possession of his cursed chair : for Satan was not fully loosed till the year of our Lord 998 ; at which time Silvester the Second came to be Pope, who was in league with the Devil. History doth relate, that at his death he called for the cardinals, and confessed that he had familiarity with the Devil, and

how he had given himself unto him body and soul, so that he might come to the Papal dignity.

After him succeeded sundry other Popes, which were notoriously wicked: by whom the Devil was fully loosed; all light of the gospel and true religion being in a manner put out, and most abominable idolatry, and all manner of villainy spreading over the face of the earth: and there St. John saith, that *Satan being fully loosed, he went forth to deceive the people which were in the four quarters of the earth, even Gog and Magog, &c.* This seducing by Satan here spoken of is the same with that which is spoken of in chap. xiii. with this exception, that this of Gog and Magog are more general. We read there how all nations, kindreds, and tongues, were made to worship the image of the beast, and to receive his mark; but that is to be extended no further than to those kingdoms which were subject to the Papacy.

But here, by these armies of Gog and Magog, are understood all the chief enemies of the Church in these last days, since the loosing of Satan, both open and secret, both Turk and Pope; for the Turk is an open enemy, the Pope a secret enemy. Gog, signifieth *covered*; Magog, *uncovered*, whereby is noted the Turk. For the Pope cometh covered under the name of Christ, and Christ's vicar, Peter's successor, &c.; but the Turk cometh uncovered, for he openly denieth and opposeth Christ.

Moreover the names of Gog and Magog are here set down, to signify of what countries these chief enemies should spring: to wit, out of Scythia, Syria, Arabia, Italy, and Spain. For Magog was the son

of Japheth, Gen. x. 2. of whom came the Scythians. Gog was the name of a great captain in the lesser Asia, which built a city, and named it after his own name, Gogartah, that is, the city of Gog. Which is put in the prophecy of Ezekiel for the whole region of the lesser Asia and Syria: whereby the prophet did foretel, that the great enemies of the Church should arise out of those countries. And in very truth they did, for out of Egypt, Scythia, Syria, and the lesser Asia, did spring up Ptolemus, Sileucus, Antigonus, Cassander, and the rest of Alexander's posterity, which vexed and oppressed the Jews for the space of two hundred and four years, even until the coming of the Messiah; at which time the divided Greek empire was overthrown, and transferred to the Romans.

Furthermore it is to be noted, that the prophet Ezekiel saith, that *Gog is the chief prince of Mesech and Tubal*. By Mesech, he meaneth Arabia; and by Tubal, Italy and Spain: marking thereby, the countries and kingdoms whence the great persecutors of the Church, from the return out of the captivity of Babylon until the coming of the Messiah should arise. For assuredly those enemies were collected from divers nations, but served chiefly under the princes of Asia the Lesser, of Syria, and of Scythia. To conclude, Gog and Magog, in Ezekiel, are put for the princes of those countries, which were the chief captains in gathering great and mighty armies unto battle against the children of Israel, after they were come out of the captivity of Babylon. And the prophet there, under the armies of Gog

and Magog, comprehendeth all the enemies that fought against them, from time to time, after the captivity unto the coming of Christ. And now for the application of this, unto the enemies of the Church under the Gospel. We must first note, that in this book the figures and phrases of speech are taken out of the law and the prophets: now, therefore, when the Lord would set forth at once all the enemies of the Church, which Satan mustereth between the time of his loosing out of prison and the coming of Christ to judgment: there is nothing more proper to signify them than those armies of Gog and Magog; and therefore the names, even Gog and Magog, are made use of to set forth those huge armies of the Turk, and the Pope, and of all the enemies of the Church in these last days, which should gather themselves to battle, being in number as the sand of the sea: as St. John saith, *Yea, did cover the whole face of the earth with their multitudes, and compassed the tents of the saints about, and the beloved city; that is, did make war against the Church and people of God; which, in comparison of them, were but as a few tents, or as some little city.* But mark what followeth, and consider the issue of the battle. The Holy Ghost saith, that *fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.* Which doth plainly shew, that the armies of Gog and Magog, though never so huge, shall be destroyed by the fire of God's wrath.

Now from this I gather, that as the armies of the Pope shall grow weaker still more and more, as formerly hath been shewed, and as experience in

many years good success, both in Ireland, the Netherlands, and against Spain also, hath partly proved, (God's most holy name be praised,) so also the armies of the Turk shall be overthrown, when they fight against the true Church, or, at least, be kept so back, that they shall not be able to compass the tents of the saints, as we see and feel this day, God be thanked.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever, Rev. xx. 10.

Here is set down the Devil's doom; to wit, that he shall be cast down into the infernal pit, as well worthy of it, both for his seducing all nations, and stirring up the armies of Gog and Magog against the Church, even to root it up, if it were possible.

Therefore St. John telleth us, that forasmuch as he is the author of all mischief, and he that hath set all the rest to work, therefore both he and his instruments, the beast and the false prophet, Gog and Magog, shall all drink of the same cup of God's eternal wrath, and be all thrown together into one prison, which is that gaping gulf, and infernal lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever.

Lo, then, what shall be the end of the Devil, the Turk, the Pope, and all the rest of the Devil's instruments which here in earth have persecuted the Church, and compassed the tents of the saints, and the beloved city.

Now after all this, in the five last verses, St. John

entereth into a lively and clear description of the last judgment: first, noting the terror and majesty of the Judge himself; he saith, that *from his face both heaven and earth fled away*; that is, no creature shall be able to endure his angry countenance in that day: and yet, to signify the purity and uprightness of his judgment, and judgment-seat, he calleth it *a white throne*. And, after this, the general citing and personal appearing of all men before him, of what degree, estate, or condition soever. For both *death and hell, sea and grave, did deliver up their dead*; and all, without exception, came to judgment. And the books of their consciences were opened, (for every man's work is engraven upon his conscience, as it were in letters of brass, or with *the point of a diamond*, as the prophet speaketh). *And they were judged of those things which were written in the books, according to their works, and according to the testimony of their own consciences. And death and hell, that is, all the heirs of death and hell, even all the society of reprobates, Papists, Atheists, and unbelievers, yea, whosoever were not found written in the book of life, were cast into the lake of fire*, which is the second death.

Now here I would have it diligently observed, that the Holy Ghost hath three several times, in this book, described the last judgment: first, in the latter end of the eleventh chapter; secondly, in the latter end of the fourteenth chapter; and now in the latter end of this chapter. And, moreover, I would have the order and causes of these descriptions well weighed. For in the eleventh chapter,

having before described the kingdom of the Pope and the Turk, and their overthrow, and also the preaching and prevailing of the gospel in these last days, he cometh to describe the last judgment. In the fourteenth chapter, having set down that *the everlasting gospel should be plentifully preached in this last age, and the overthrow of Babylon* immediately following, he proceedeth to the description of the last day. In this chapter, having before declared the utter overthrow of Rome, and of the beast and false prophet, of Gog and Magog, and all the power of God's adversaries, he proceedeth to this description of Christ's second coming, which we have heard of. From all this I do gather, that the utter overthrow of the Pope, and all his adherents, shall be in this life, a little before the coming of Christ to judgment.

CHAP. XXI.

As we have heard before of the utter overthrow of the beast, and the false prophet, and all their adherents, and also of the everlasting condemnation of the dragon, that old serpent, which set them all at work. So now in this chapter we are to hear of that most happy and blessed state, which the faithful shall dwell in for evermore: so that the main drift of this chapter, is most fully to describe that infinite glory, and endless felicity, to the which all the 144,000, that is, all the elect of God, shall be

raised to, when both the beast, and all that have received his mark, shall be cast into the infernal lake.

This chapter may very fitly be divided into four parts.

The first, is a description of the renovation of the world, and the restoration of the creature.

The second, is a laying forth of the most glorious state of the Church when it shall be freed from all misery.

The third, is a declaration from God himself, concerning the renovation of all things, the felicity of his elect, and the endless pain and torment of all reprobates.

The fourth, is a lively description of the very kingdom of God, and the unspeakable joys of heaven, under the figure of a great city, called the holy Jerusalem: which city is here most gloriously described, by its walls, gates, foundations, streets, height, length, breadth, brightness, matter, form, and inhabitants.

The text.—*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more*

death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away, Rev. xxi. 1, 2, 3, 4.

By a new heaven and a new earth, is meant the renewed state of heaven and earth, after this life, in their quality, not in their substance. For we do believe, according to the scripture, that this visible heaven, and this visible earth, shall continue for ever, as touching their matter and substance; but shall be greatly altered and changed in condition and quality. For St. Peter saith, *We look for new heavens, and a new earth, according to his promise, wherein dwelleth righteousness:* that is, such heavens, and such an earth, as is free from all corruption and sin. Which thing also the apostle St. Paul doth plainly teach, saying, that *the creature doth fervently expect, when the sons of God shall be revealed,* that is, when God's children shall be made known to be, as they are, the very heirs of infinite glory, which in this life doth not appear. And he giveth two reasons of this desire of the creature: one is, because, in the meantime, it is subject to vanity and corruption; the other is, that then it shall be free from both. And for this cause the apostle saith, that *the creature groweth with us, and earnestly desireth, and longeth, after that day wherein it shall be set free from the bondage of corruption,* and restored to that state in which it was before the fall. But whether this is to be understood of heaven and earth only, or of heaven and earth and the whole creation, I will not here go about to discuss: however, I do greatly incline to their opinion, who

hold, that heaven and earth, and the whole creation, shall be restored to their first state, and remain for ever, to set forth the glory of the Creator, and to be of the same use to glorified men as they are at present to angels.

Now, whereas St. John addeth, *that there shall be no more sea*: he meaneth, that there shall be no more any troublesome and confused state of this world; no more broils, waves, tempests, and storms, as there are in this life. For the word *sea* is so taken twice or thrice before.

By *the holy city, new Jerusalem*, he meaneth the Church triumphant; which, therefore, is said *to come down from God out of heaven*, because it hath all its newness and holiness from God, and from heaven; whereby it is now prepared, and made ready to be married unto Christ, *even as a bride prepared for her husband*. And for this cause St. John heareth a voice from heaven, saying, *The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God*: meaning thereby, that Jesus Christ will be with his glorified Spouse for ever in the heavens, when *she shall be freed from all tears, wo, and misery*, as the next verse declareth: giving also a reason for it, which is, that *the former things are passed away*; meaning, the state wherein the world is now, being subject to many afflictions, temptations, vanities, and corruptions.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write;

for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death, Rev. xxi. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Here the omnipotent God, which sitteth upon the most glorious throne, doth protest that he will make all things new; that is, restore the world to that excellent state wherein it was before Adam's fall, and his elect, to a state and condition far more excellent, in heaven. And to make it still more plain, he willeth and commandeth John *to write it, and record it as a thing most certain and infallible*, and to set it down as a thing already done. For things to come, which are decreed in the counsel of God, are as certain as if they were past: for God cannot err, alter, or change; and therefore he saith, *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the unchangeable and immutable God. And addeth, that he will give freely to every one that is athirst of the well of the water of life*; that is, without regard to our deserts, he will give to every one that earnestly seeketh after heaven, and heavenly things, his full reward. And moreover, *that whosoever overcometh in the spiritual battle, shall have of all good things*, both in this life and the life to come, as

having special right and interest therein through *Christ, God being his Father, and he his Son and Heir*. But, on the other hand, he willeth it to be written and recorded, as certain, *that all reprobates, all atheists, worldlings, and all unbelievers, shall have their part and portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, for ever.*

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, Rev. xxi. 9, 10, 11.

Here one of the angels, mentioned in the sixteenth chapter, which had a vial of God's wrath, talketh with John, and telleth him that he will shew him the bride, the Lamb's wife, that is, the Church triumphant, in her glorified state, being united unto Christ in the kingdom of his glory; and therefore St. John saith, this angel carried him away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed him that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

We read in the seventeenth chapter, that when the angel shewed John the whore of Babylon, he carried him away into the wilderness in the spirit, because the whore of Babylon should render the Church barren and desolate in the wilderness; but

now that he is to see the spouse of Christ in her glory, and to describe the everlasting Jerusalem, the angel taketh him in the spirit to a very high mountain, that he may have a full view of it, as Moses was carried up to the top of the mountain of Nebo, from which he might see the holy land; which, the scripture saith, none can take a right view of, nor of those heavenly things, except those who raise themselves to that glorious height by their holy affections, and heavenly conversation.

In this chapter St. John telleth us, that when he had a sight of this new Jerusalem, it had in it the very glory of God. If he had seen the glory of an angel in heaven, it had been a sight surpassing all that was seen on Mount Sinai; but he saw the glory of God, which is still greater, and far exceedeth every thing. For who can conceive, or express, what the infinite glory of God is? who, as the apostle saith, dwelleth in accessible light, or such light as none can approach.

This, then, is intended as a full description of the beauty and excellence of the new Jerusalem, that it comprehendeth in it the very glory of God; but yet, for amplification's sake, it is compared to *a jasper stone*, for its never-fading greenness; and to *a crystal*, for its shining brightness, and glittering for ever.

And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three

gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, Rev. xxi. 12, 13, 14.

Now St. John proceeds to the description of the wall and gates of this great city. This we all know, that a strong wall serveth for the safety and defence of a city, and for the security of such as dwell in it. For if it be so high that none can scale it, and so thick that none can batter it, then it is indeed impregnable, and the citizens in great security. The wall of heaven is so high, as none can scale it, as it is set down in the twelfth verse; and so thick, that no cannon can pierce it, as appeareth in the seventeenth verse: therefore all the inhabitants of this new Jerusalem are out of all fear or danger.

Moreover, this city hath *twelve gates*, to signify an hard access for enemies to break in, and an easy passage for the citizens themselves to go in and out. And at those twelve gates *twelve angels*, at every gate *an angel*, as it were a porter, to see that none be let in but the true citizens, and those whom the Almighty chooses to admit; which are here named to be the *twelve tribes of Israel*, that is, all the elect of God, both of the Jews and Gentiles.

Moreover it is said, that there were *three gates on every side of the city, both east, west, north, and south*, to note, that out of all quarters of the earth the redeemed should be gathered; and, as our Saviour saith, *Many shall come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.* So that it is not material what country or

nation a man is of, whether English, Scotch, French, or Spanish, so that he be a believer; for then he shall be sure to be let in at one gate or another, either at the *east gate*, or the *west gate*, the *north gate*, or the *south gate*.

Moreover, the wall of this city *hath twelve foundations*; and in every gate the name of an apostle, so that all the gates had the name of the Lamb's twelve apostles, to signify that the foundation of this city is laid upon the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel, Rev. xxi. 15, 16, 17.

Now St. John telleth us, that the angel which talked with him had a golden reed to measure both the city, and the gates, and the walls thereof. Measuring with reeds was of great use in ancient time, as we read in the prophecy of Ezekiel and Zachariah, and as we heard before in the eleventh chapter. But because all things belonging to this celestial Jerusalem are superexcellent and glorious, therefore the very measuring rod and reed is of pure gold.

This great and glorious city is said to *lie four-square*, to remind us that it standeth firm; and

that it shall never be moved, but standeth fast for ever. As the apostle saith, *Seeing we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace whereby we may so serve God, that we may please him with reverence and fear*

The angel, with his golden measuring-rod, measureth the square sides of the city, both the length, breadth, heighth, and depth of it, and findeth each of them to be 12,000 furlongs, which, after eight furlongs to the mile, maketh, in our account, 1500 miles; and so the whole square of this great city cometh to 6000 miles, which is a great extent, and noteth unto us the immensity of God's kingdom, and that there is room enough for all the inhabitants thereof; yea, most pleasant and goodly places: as our Lord Jesus saith, *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you.*

After this he measureth the thickness of the wall, and findeth it to be an hundred forty and four cubits long; which, after our common account of two cubits to a yard, amount to seventy and two yards, which is a goodly thickness, even such as no cannon can pierce, and therefore altogether impregnable, as hath been said before.

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper: the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chryso-

lite ; the eighth, beryl ; the ninth, a topaz ; the tenth, a chrysoprasus ; the eleventh ; a jacinth ; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls ; every several gate was of one pearl ; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass, Rev. xxi. 18, 19, 20, 21.

As we have heard of the form of this goodly city, so now we are to hear of the matter of it, that is to say, of what materials it is built. First, St. John telleth us, that the whole city is of most pure and glittering gold, like unto glass ; and that the wall was of jasper, most green and flourishing ; and, also, that the very foundation of the wall was beautified and adorned with twelve sundry kinds of precious stones, which he reckoneth up. We count it a great thing here below, to compass and close in our houses with a wall of brick, and none can do it but men of good substance : but, alas, what is that to this wall ? what is brick to precious stones, and pebbles to pearls ? But St. John addeth, that the gates were of pearl, and the streets of the city of pure gold : oh, how grand, how beautiful, how glorious, how glittering, how admirable a city is this ! for, if the gates be of pearl, and the streets of gold, what must be those mansions which our Lord hath prepared his disciples ? But here we must not grossly imagine that the kingdom of God is of such metal and matter as is here described. But the Holy Ghost would give us some idea of it, by comparing it with those things which are esteemed most among men. For otherwise there is no comparison betwixt gold, pearl, and precious stones, and those

heavenly, invisible, and immortal things which we look for, and hope for, through Christ; which, indeed, are so great, so glorious, and so inconceivable, that gold, pearl, and precious stones, are scarcely so much as any shew, shadow, or resemblance thereof.

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life, Rev. xxi. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

In this new Jerusalem *there is no temple*, as was in the old Jerusalem: for there shall be no need of any, no need of doctrine, of sacraments, of prayer, as in the old temple; wherein the law was taught, sacraments administered, sacrifices offered, and many other rites and ceremonies observed.

But St. John saith, that *now God and Christ shall be all in all. They shall be the temple of this most holy city.* And all the elect shall fully know them, and dwell with them for ever.

And as the city hath no need of any temple, so

hath it *no need of any light, either of sun or moon. For the glory of God, and the brightness of the Lamb, do light it for ever*; whose incomprehensible brightness doth as far excel the brightness of the sun and moon, as they excel a candle at noon-day. But it may be demanded, Who shall dwell in this glorious city, and in this great light? St. John answereth, that *the people that are saved shall walk in it*; that is, all the *Israel* of God, all true believers, that are to be so happy as to come to the possession of such a kingdom as is here described. For St. John saith, that the resplendent brightness of this city is so great, that *even the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour unto it*. And also, that *the glory and honour of the Gentiles shall be brought unto it*.

Oh, how unspeakable is the glory of this city, that kings shall throw down their crowns and sceptres before it, accounting all their pomp and glory but as dust in respect of it! and the magnificence and pomp of all the potentates of the earth shall here be laid down. And although none of the kings and nobles of the Gentiles might be admitted into the old Jerusalem, yet all of the Gentiles that believe shall be admitted into this new Jerusalem, and made free citizens thereof for ever. And although the gates of this city always stand open, both night and day, fearing no danger from enemies, *yet no unclean thing shall enter into it, but only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life*.

Thus we see how gloriously the Holy Ghost hath described unto us this city of the saints, and habi-

tation of the just, for evermore. He must needs be as insensible as a block, that is not moved with the consideration of this endless felicity. For this city is described unto us in so glorious and admirable a manner, to bring us into love with it, and to work in us an unquenchable thirst and desire after it. Oh, therefore, let us spend many thoughts upon it; let us enter into deep meditations of the inestimable glory of it; let us long till we come to the possession of it, even as the heir longeth till he come to the possession of his lands; let us think every day ten, and every year twenty, till we get in possession; let us, with the apostle, *sigh and groan, desiring to be clothed with our house, which is from heaven*. Let us, in the meantime, cast away all things that may hinder us in our Christian course; let us shake off every burthen, and run with patience the race that is set before us; let us, as they which strive for the victory, abstain from all hinderances. And since we strive so earnestly for a corruptible crown, how much more ought we for an uncorruptible? for what pains, what cost, what labour can be too much for a kingdom? Let us, therefore, strive and strain to get into this heavenly city. Oh, what fools are they which deprive themselves willingly of this endless glory for a few earthly gratifications! Oh, what madmen are they which bereave themselves of a place in this city for a few carnal pleasures and delights! Oh, what madmen are they which shut themselves out of these everlasting habitations for a little transitory pleasure! Oh, what intolerable fools are all such

as will willingly be barred out of this palace of infinite pleasure for the short fruition of worldly gain ! Let us, therefore, in all time to come, reckon more of heaven, and less of the earth ; let us mind heavenly things, and despise earthly things ; let us press hard unto the things that are before us, and forget the things that are behind ; let us strive hard for the price of the high calling of God, and despise the glory of this world.

CHAP. XXII.

IN this chapter St. John proceedeth yet more largely to describe the blessed state of all God's saints in the kingdom of glory: and the principal scope and drift of this chapter, is yet more to enlarge the joys of God's people after this life, and to establish the authority of this prophecy.

This chapter containeth four principal parts.

The first, is an amplification of the joys of God's kingdom.

The second, is a confirmation of the authority of this book.

The third, is an exhortation both to spread abroad the knowledge of this book ; and also for every man to prepare himself for the coming of Christ unto judgment.

The fourth, is a fervent desire of the Church for the second appearing of Christ.

The text.---*And he shewed me a pure river of water*

of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and their names shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun; for the Lord God hath given them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

The angel doth further shew unto John a pure river of the water of life: whereby is purified the overflowing abundance of good things which the righteous shall enjoy in the kingdom of glory.

This river is said to *proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*, because God in Christ is the origin of all this life and happiness.

Further it is added, *that in the midst of the golden street of this new Jerusalem, and of both sides the river, there was a tree of life.* Which representeth Christ, now in this heavenly paradise, as in former time it represented him in the earthly paradise; and also that eternal and blessed life, which our first parents would have enjoyed, had they continued in obedience to God.

This tree standeth not in an outer-corner of the city, but in the very midst of the street, and on

both sides of the river, that all the citizens of the new Jerusalem might have free access unto it, and taste of the most dainty fruits thereof, in great variety; for *it beareth twelve manner of fruits*, that is, in Christ all variety of pleasure, and endless delight, is to be found.

This *tree beareth fruit every month*, as well in winter as in summer; for here every month is autumn. The sense is, that in Christ the new and fresh fruits of immortal joy, without any satiety or loathing, are for ever to be found.

The leaves of this tree are very medicinable and healthy: for *they serve for the healing of the nations*, that is, to preserve them from all diseases and griefs: which argueth a most blessed life, not subject to sickness, or any other infirmity. For Christ is our never-failing physician, which, in this life, healeth all our spiritual diseases and infirmities; and, after this life, will preserve us in perpetual health and happiness.

There shall be no more curse: that is, in the heavenly paradise we shall no more be subject to any curse, as Adam was in the earthly paradise. Which also argueth the perfection of happiness after this life; and yet, for further amplification of this most glorious state, it is said that the throne of God, and of Christ, shall be erected in the midst of this golden street; and all his chosen people shall there accompany him, dwell with him, be always about him, yea, and serve him, without weariness, for ever. Yea, all his faithful worshippers shall come so near

his throne, *that they shall see his very face*, and be covered with his glory; having his image, his name, his wisdom, and mercy, imprinted *in their foreheads*. Yea, his unconceivable light and glory shall be so resplendent, that there *shall be neither night, nor need of candle*: and in his glittering and most glorious chamber of presence shall his elect reign, and triumph with him for evermore in infinite felicity; and the very fruition of eternal happiness, where shall be mirth without measure, and pleasure without sorrow: as the prophet saith, *In thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore*.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God, Rev. xxii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

In these four verses, are four reasons brought to confirm the authority of this book.

The first of them is the affirmation of the angel.

The second, the authority of the Most High God.

The third, the testimony of Jesus, pronouncing them blessed which keep this prophecy.

The fourth, the testimony of St. John, who heard and saw these things. But in the epistle to the reader, I have more at large considered this argument, and these same verses, and therefore shall say nothing of them here ; nor of John's adoration, and the angel's refusal, they being things most manifest, and easy to understand.

And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie
 Rev. xxii. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

Here is, first, an exhortation to publish and proclaim the knowledge of this book to all people ; and in no wise to conceal it, or keep it close ; as hath been shewed before.

Here is a further admonition, that *they which are unrighteous, shall be unrighteous still, &c.* Which is no allowance or encouragement granted unto

wicked men to continue in their evil ways; but is rather a terrible threat, if we take all the words together in this and the next verse; and is as if he should say, If men will continue in their wickedness, yet certainly Christ will come shortly, and reward them according to their works.

Or else it may be a phrase of speech similar to that in another place, where the Holy Ghost saith to the young man, *Walk in the ways of thine own heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment.*

After this, here is blessedness pronounced upon all such as keep the commandments of God; and it is said, that *their right is in the tree of life*: not meaning thereby, that their keeping of commandments is the cause of their right in Christ, but only an effect or consequence. For our good works do not go before, as causes of our justification; but follow after, as declarations of the same. For by doing we are not made just in the sight of God, but only declared to be just in the sight of men.

And as for our keeping the commandments, we do it not in such perfection as God's justice requireth, but in such measure as his mercy accepteth through Christ. And here the Holy Ghost saith, that all they which have a right in Christ, which is the tree of life, and endeavour to keep the commandments, shall enter in through the gates into the new Jerusalem: but, on the contrary, all the wicked, whom he calleth dogs, enchanters,

whoremongers, &c. shall be utterly shut out, as having nothing to do in the everlasting city, their portion being allotted in the place prepared for them, according to the righteous judgment of God.

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Rev. xxii. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

The authority of this book is here again confirmed by the person of him who is the author of it, that is, Jesus Christ, who is here called *the root and offspring of David*; because he is descended from the house of David, according to the flesh; and also because he is the author of that eternal kingdom which all the prophets did foretel should spring out of the house of David, who was in deed

and in truth established in Christ, who is our true David, and, as it is here said, *the bright morning star*, which hath most gloriously risen upon the world, to dispel all darkness, and to bring the great and everlasting light.

Moreover, here is great protestation made in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses, of *great plagues to be inflicted upon all such as shall add any thing unto this book, or take away any thing from it*. Which also confirmeth the authority of this book : for that to which nothing may be added, and from which nothing may be taken away, must needs be absolute and perfect. This book is such a one : therefore this book is absolute and perfect, being a part of God's everlasting truth.

Last of all, here is set down the fervent desire of the Church after her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that, after his final triumph, she may be joined to him in his eternal kingdom of happiness and glory. Which is the sense of these words, *The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come*. For it is proper and peculiar only to the Church to hear, wait, and long for the coming of Christ. *And let him that is athirst, come*. That is, all such as thirst after righteousness. For they are allowed freely to drink of the water of life. The plain meaning of all this is, that the Church being directed by the Holy Ghost, most vehemently prayeth and longeth for the coming of Christ, that her happiness may be complete. And therefore, to satisfy her desire, Jesus Christ, the heavenly

bridegroom, saith, *I come quickly.* To which the bride saith, *Amen, amen. Even so be it. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,* and make an end of these sinful and conflicting days, that all thy dear people may have and enjoy their long looked-for happiness and felicity in the heavens for ever and ever.

THE END.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HIS VERY GOOD LORD

ROBERT, LORD RICH,

EVERLASTING CONSOLATION AND GOOD HOPE, THROUGH
GRACE.

To be a father to the fatherless, is properly the virtue of the Most High, and therefore mete for those who bear his name and office upon earth: among whom (Right Honourable), seeing it hath pleased his Majesty to count your Lordship faithful, and to put you in so high a service, it shall (I assure myself,) be matter of rejoicing unto your Lordship to take the patronage of this poor orphan, which knoweth not whither to fly for succour but to you, who did so many ways commend your favour to his late deceased father, that, if he had lived to the birth of this his last offspring, it was his full purpose (as many can witness,) to have committed it unto your Lordship's protection, as most mete among many to take this patronage upon you; that this young infant, growing up under your roof, may in time effect that, indeed, whereof it bears the name, to be *THE RUIN OF ROME*. To speak of the excellent parts thereof, and of what hope it is like

to be in the Church of Christ, I think needless, and, I fear, the note of partiality: it shall speak for itself, and, (I doubt not,) will commend to all posterity his worthy father's memory. Now, for myself, (Right Honourable,) being so straitly bound to this duty, in regard of my near conjunction with my late brother, Master Dent, and the great importunity of his poor widow, I was the more willingly drawn hereunto in two respects: the one, to give some public testimony of my love towards him, and reverence of the rare grace which we all, (who enjoyed his sweet society,) did continually, to our comfort, behold in him: whose learning his labours do shew; whose diligence, yea, extreme and unwearied pains in his ministry, publicly, privately, at home, and abroad, for 'four and twenty years at least, all our country can testify. All which being adorned with so special humility, do make his name the greater, and our loss the more grievous. I may not leave out this, which I avow to be as certain as it is singular, that, besides all other his great labours, he had (with the Apostle,) a special care of all the Churches night and day, by study and fervent prayer, procuring the prosperity of Sion, and the ruin of Rome. And to end with his blessed end, his life was not more profitable to others, than his death is peaceable to himself; scarce a groan to be heard, though his fever must needs be violent, which dispatched him in three days. And having made a pithy confession of his faith, "This faith (said he,) have I preached; this faith have I lived in; this faith I do die in; and this faith would

I have sealed with my blood, if God had so thought it good: and tell my brethren so." And drawing near his end, he said, *I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; and now is that crown of righteousness laid up for me, the which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day; and so gave up his last breath with these words, I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy law is exceeding large.*

The other respect, (my special good Lord), for the which I am the more willing to come thus upon the stage (though my part be small, full suitable to my ability,) is, that I might be as the mouth of many, to publish to posterity what high account all that know the truth, (among us at least,) do make of your Lordship, that I dare say not the loins only, but the souls of thousands do bless you, and God for you: praying for a rich reward to be given you of the Lord, and that with your ancient predecessor, honourable Nehemiah, the Lord would remember you herein, and wipe not out all the kindness you have shewed to the house of your God, and on the ministers thereof. For in the zeal of God, and uprightness of my heart, not to give titles unto men (which is not my wont), but to provoke all of like honourable condition to follow your godly practice: this I say, that as your pure religion is the crown of your nobility, so this is the crown of your religion; that besides your ordinary presence in the public assemblies of the Church, your zeal to God, and love to his people, hath herein especially

been manifested to the world, in your continual care to plant faithful preachers in all those livings which have been in your Lordship's gift, or which, by all your friends, you could procure. What is the worthy fruit thereof cannot indeed be valued, much less by me now uttered; yet this I say, with the common consent of all sound-hearted Protestants, that if the true prophets of God be the chariots and horsemen of Israel, then may we refer to this honourable practice of your Lordship, and other like Christian patrons (as to its chief means under God, and under the religious regiment of your gracious Sovereign,) the safety of his Highness' person, this admirable tranquillity of the realm, that notable ruin of Rome, which is so worthily with us effected, and shall be assuredly elsewhere, in due time, accomplished. And, to say all in a few words, to this may we refer the safety of soul and body of many thousands in the land, who, though they do and shall live by faith, yet doth their righteousness far exceed the righteousness of all Popish hypocrites, both in duty to God, and to their dread Sovereign our noble King.

Whereupon I may conclude, that I scarce think of any service more honourable to God, and profitable to his Church, than this care to bring into the Lord's temple such painful labourers as, both by life and doctrine, do faithfully build up the same. Go on therefore, (Right Honourable,) and cease not to shine out in this dark world with such light or good example; and, withal, rest upon his word,

who cannot lie, that you shall shine in the kingdom of light, whereinto shall enter no unclean thing; neither whatsoever worketh abomination or lies, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. To which blessed inheritance, immortal, undefiled, and that fadeth not, that God of his mercy would bring you, my heart's desire and prayer is, and shall be; and, in the mean season, that the years of your life may be full of honour to God, profit to his Church, and comfort to your own soul.

Your honour's most deeply bound,

EZEKHEL CULVERWELL.

THE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

BEING often requested, gentle reader, and much importuned, by both learned and godly, to publish that doctrine of the *Apocalypse*, which divers of them, with lively voice, heard publicly delivered, I did at last, upon my most mature deliberation, yield unto their reasonable request: I mean the reasons of their request. Indeed, I do ingenuously confess, I am the *unmeetest* of many, which this age (God be thanked) doth afford, to deal in a matter of so great importance, or any wise to be employed in so great and honourable a service as this. But if I do industriously use my small talent, and be found faithful in a little, I hope it shall have both cheerful and comfortable acceptance with the Church of God. For this, I presume, will be granted by all, that he which hath but a little strength, and yet putteth it forth to the uttermost to do good withal, is more to be commended than he which hath thrice his strength, and useth it not to the help and benefit of others. And true it is, indeed, that sundry worthy labours of divers excellent men, upon the *Apocalypse* are already extant; so as he may seem to pour water into the sea, or go about to mend the crows eyes, that will attempt to add any thing to that which is already published. But know this, O Christian reader, that the

Lord's garden is so large and plentiful of all most sweet and pleasant flowers, that where any one hath gathered a nosegay most fragrant and delectable, another may come after him and gather one not to be contemned. For the wisdom of God is such an undrainable fountain and head-spring, that where one hath drawn much before, another may come and draw as much afterward; yea, though thousands do succeed, yet can this fountain never be drawn dry. Be it far from me to arrogate any thing to myself above others; for I do freely acknowledge, that in this work I have received considerable information from others, and therefore do not, as a judge, give sentence upon other men's works; but am rather as one that would assist in furnishing the feast, by bringing in my dish among them; or, as one that in the same cause would come in as a third or fourth witness, to testify and confirm the same thing. And verily, through the gracious assistance of God's Spirit, my simple purpose and endeavour is to give aid, and, to the utmost of my power, to further that which is already begun, and to provoke others of greater gifts to come after with their great lights and lanterns in their hands, to descry and discover whatsoever in this prophecy is not fully seen into.

I am not ignorant that some would not have this book meddled with, nor in any wise to be expounded among the common people, because (say they) it is so dark and hard to understand. But let all such leave their own opinions, and hearken to what the Holy Ghost saith: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy," &c. What

can be said more? or more effectually to stir us up to hear and read, and with all gladness to embrace this book, than to tell us, that in so doing we shall be blessed? For the things contained in this book are no trifles; they are not things only for a show, to move wonderment, or to delight the curious mind of men: but such as indeed do give true blessedness unto all those that are well instructed in them. What thing is greater, than to be blessed for evermore? If we be not exceedingly dull, yea, even like stocks and stones, it must even move us, and stir us up. For who will wittingly and willingly lose his own blessedness, or suffer it to be taken from him, when he may prevent it? If any man will object, that a man may be blessed well enough without the knowledge of this book, and that there are books enough in the scripture to procure our blessedness without this; and that thousands are now in heaven which never knew what this book meant? I answer, that all this doth not take away the necessary use of this book; for the Holy Ghost doth pronounce a blessing upon the heads of those that read and study this book; not because a man cannot be saved without it, but because of the great comfort which it ministereth unto us of this age, and hath ministered unto all the Churches since the Apostles' times. For it is the prophecy of this age, and the prophecy of all the ages since Christ; wherein is fully shewed what shall be the estate and condition of the Church in the several ages thereof unto the end of the world. For God, according to his admirable wisdom and mercy, hath never from the beginning left his Church with-

out a prophecy. For we know, that immediately after the fall of our first parents, God himself, for the great comfort of his Church, did foretel, long before, that restoration should be made by the Messiah, his Son, according as it came to pass in the fulness of time. Afterwards he did foretel to his people of Israel, their great servitude, and intolerable bondage in Egypt; and also the end and full termination thereof, after four hundred and thirty years. After all this, he foretold, by his servants the prophets, of the captivity in Babylon, and the full expiration thereof at the end of seventy years. And yet further, for the comfort and consolation of his people, he foretold, by Daniel and Ezekiel, of the great afflictions and troubles which his Church should endure from the persecutions of the divided Greek empire; (I mean Alexander's posterity, especially the kings of Egypt and Syria, who descended from Ptolomeus and Seleucus, whom the scripture calleth the kings of the North and of the South,) for the space of one hundred and ninety-four years, and of the precise termination thereof at the coming of the Messiah. Lo, then, what care God hath had for his Church in all ages before the coming of his Son in the flesh, so to foretell both its afflictions, and the exact period and termination of them. And shall we not think that God hath the like care of his Church now which he had then; or hath he not had as much concern for the good of his Church, since the promised Messiah was actually sent, as before? Yea, assuredly he hath, and much more too; for if his care and providence was so great for his Church in former times, in her minority, how much

greater must it be now that she is come to her ripeness and full age.

And if, when it was less glorious, it was so great, how much greater must it be now that it is far more glorious. Therefore now unto us he foretelleth, by his servant John, what shall be the state of the Church unto the end of the world; and, therefore, blessed is he that readeth this book; since it foretelleth the Church's affliction in this age by the whore of Babylon, and of the full end und termination thereof. It sheweth justly and precisely what the Church has suffered since the apostle's time in several ages, and what it shall suffer; and also how all its enemies shall shortly be trodden under foot.

What can be more joyful or comfortable to all the people of God, than to know beforehand that Babylon shall fall; that Rome shall come down; and that Antichrist, the great persecutor of the Church, shall be utterly confounded and consumed in this world, notwithstanding all endeavours to the contrary, and notwithstanding all the opposition raised up against the Church by seminary priests, jesuits, popes, cardinals, &c. who all in this age actively exert themselves, and make use of every means to repair the ruins of Rome, and to fill up the breaches which are made in the walls of Babylon, their great city. But all in vain; for let them do their utmost, it shall fall; it shall fall, as Dagon before the presence of the ark; it shall, without hope of recovery: for hath the Lord spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? or shall any word of his ever fall to the ground? Since, therefore, the Papists, greatly fearing the fall of

their Babylon, and the drying up of their Euphrates, do so bestir themselves in every part to prevent it, we ought to be as resolute for Christ as they are for Antichrist; and as studious to uphold the kingdom of Christ as they are to uphold the kingdom of Antichrist. And, for this purpose, it is requisite and necessary that all the Lord's people should be acquainted with this book, and armed against them with the things revealed in this prophecy. For this book is a most precious jewel, which God hath bestowed upon his Church in this last age; and it is much to be lamented, that all the servants of God are not better acquainted with it, especially in these times. For this prophecy layeth all open, and plainly telleth us what shall be the issue and success of this contest; which side shall have the victory, and which side shall be overcome. And, therefore, it is very needful that it should be expounded again and again, and all the Lord's people be made thoroughly acquainted with it. For in this age wherein we live, this prophecy ought to be studied, that all good Protestants may be armed with it, as with an armour of proof, against all future times. St. John plainly telleth the people of his time, even the Churches of Asia, that they should be blessed by reading and studying this book, because they should thereby be forewarned and forearmed against many imminent troubles and future dangers. "For (saith he), the time is at hand;" that is to say, some things were even then to be fulfilled; and some things foretold in this book did begin to be fulfilled soon after they were shewn unto John; for the mystery of iniquity did even then begin to work.

The Church, in the apostle's time, had her conflicts: for persecutions began even then to be raised up, and heresies began to spring and sprout. Afterward, by degrees, the great Antichrist did approach towards his cursed seat. And, after all this, St. John foretelleth how he should take possession of his abominable and most execrable seat and see of Rome; how he should reign and rule for a time as the monarch of the world; how he should prevail against the Church, and make war against the saints; how he should reign but a short time, and afterward fall down as fast as ever he rose up, and decrease as fast as ever he increased. "Therefore blessed is he (saith St. John,) that diligently readeth and peruseth this book," that thereby he may foresee all these things, and be prepared for them. Now, to apply all this to our times, I say they are twice happy that are studious and diligent in searching out the true sense and meaning of this prophecy, that thereby they may be strengthened against all the assaults of their enemies, and the enemies of God's Church, and hold fast to the everlasting truth of God, knowing for a certainty that Antichrist shall not long prevail. The date of his reign is almost out, and the time draweth on apace, wherein he shall be laid in the dust.

But I will now proceed to another reason, to prove that this book of the Revelation ought not to be concealed, but openly preached and published to the whole Church of God in this age. My reason is taken out of the twenty-second chapter of this book, the tenth verse, in these words, "Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand." Here is

an express commandment from God, that this book, and the doctrine of it, should not be sealed up, that is to say, kept close from the knowledge of God's people; but that it must be always unsealed, that all men may open it, read it, and see what is in it: for it is a borrowed speech, taken from the sealing of letters. For we all know, that letters are sealed that none may open them, or read them, but only those whom it doth concern; but if they be of purpose left unsealed, then any man may read them without danger. So the Lord willeth and commandeth, that this book of the Revelation should of purpose be left unsealed, that all the people of God may read it, study it, and know it. If any man doubt whether the metaphor of sealing be thus taken in the scripture, let him read the scriptures, and he will find it taken in this sense. Whereby it doth evidently appear, that the mind and meaning of God is, that this book should be proclaimed and published in all the Churches. And upon this ground I hold that every minister of the gospel standeth bound, as much as in him lieth, to preach the doctrine of the Apocalypse to his particular charge and congregation; for every minister of the gospel must shew unto his people all the counsel of God, and keep back nothing; as Paul testifieth that he did, to the great comfort of his conscience. And as the doctrine of the Revelation is a part of the counsel and will of God, therefore it must not be concealed or kept back from the knowledge of the people of God. And, in these days, I think it not only right and convenient that it should be so, but, in truth, absolutely necessary.

But now me thinketh I hear some man say, What! what! must this book of the Apocalypse be preached and made known to the common people? alas, what should they do with it? It is not for them to meddle with. I answer, that the Holy Ghost saith this book must be made known to all the servants of God. For St. John calleth it the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to shew unto all his servants. It is plain, therefore, that all the servants of God, both men and women, young and old, rich and poor, must be made acquainted with this book. Moreover, John is commanded by the God of heaven to set down all the visions which the angel shewed him, and to write them all in a book, and to send them to the seven Churches of Asia; that is, to people of all sorts and conditions: and therefore this book doth not only concern preachers and deep divines, but every one; for it doth minister great comfort and strength of faith to all the people of God that live in this age. But here the Papists object that this book is full of darkness and obscurity, and therefore not for the common people to meddle with: nay, (say they,) there are as many mysteries as words in it, and therefore why should men trouble their heads about it. But no wonder that the Papists say so much, for it is the wound of their kingdom, and the destruction of their Babylon. As for others, both learned and godly, which in this point are almost of the same mind, that they will not meddle with this book of the Revelation, I cannot but marvel at it. The modesty and humiliation of some very rare and reverend men of learning, and great variety of gifts, is greatly to be

commendea. but if I were worthy to give them advice, I would wish them, in this matter, to change their mind, and to be of another resolution; for I dare avouch it, that there is nothing in this prophecy which study and diligence, with prayer and humility, may not overcome. True it is indeed, that the shell is thick, and hard to break; but, being broken, the kernel is most sweet and pleasant. If any be discouraged with the darkness and obscurity of it, let him hearken to these reasons. First, it is called a Revelation; which is as much as to say, a discovery of things which did lie hid: and if it be an uncovering, or revealing of things, it may, no doubt, be known and seen into. For revealed things are for us and our children. If it be a revelation, how is it, some say, that it cannot be understood? For it is contrary to the nature of a revelation, to be so dark that none can understand it. But shall we say, that the Holy Ghost, which is the spirit of truth, hath given a wrong name unto it? God forbid! But if it does hide matters, or set them forth so that they cannot be understood, then it is not rightly called a revelation; and if this book be so mystical, that it cannot be understood; if the interpretation of it be uncertain; and if the common people cannot be taught to understand it; how then should the Holy Ghost say, "Blessed is he that readeth the words of this prophecy," &c. Let any man judge that hath common sense, Can any man be blessed by hearing and reading those things which he understandeth not? I trow not. Then it followeth, that this book may be understood; and, no doubt, is understood by many; and

might be better understood by many more, if they would bend their minds to study it. *The Holy Ghost*, as I said before, willeth, and commandeth, that the words of this prophecy should not be sealed up: whereby it is evident, that he would have them read and made known to all. Then I reason thus: that which is open, and unsealed, may be read: therefore this book may be read and known. If men say, these prophecies are sealed and hid; and God say, they are unsealed and open; are we to believe men or God? If any reply, and say, *We feel, and find by experience*, that this book is hard to be understood: I answer, that the fault is in ourselves; because we are so negligent in the search and study of it. For if we did, with that humility and reverend care that ought to be in us, search after the things revealed in this book, we should find that they are not sealed up, but lie open to be read and known. True it is indeed, that if any man fix upon some part of it, and take it by itself, he shall find it very dark; but if he look through the whole book, and mark and observe diligently how things are related, he shall find no such darkness as he feareth, for there is a remarkable connection of times and events observed in this book, even from the first chapter unto the last, as, *Goa willing*, shall more fully and plainly appear in the particular opening and interpretation thereof. One great objection against this prophecy is, that the fathers profess it is full of mysteries, and that they could not understand it. If they could not understand it, say some, how shall we understand it? Is it not great arrogance for us to say we understand

it better than they did. I answer, No: for a man of learning, in comparison, may now in these days more easily understand and expound this book, than the most learned doctor, and fathers in ancient times. The reason is this, we live in an age wherein most of the things prophesied in this book are fulfilled. Now the fulfillment of a prophecy is the best exposition of it. But the fathers lived in a time wherein many of these things were not come to pass, and therefore more hard for them to interpret and understand; as those things in this prophecy, which are not yet fulfilled, are most difficult for us to understand. But when a prophecy is fulfilled, it is an easy matter to say, this was the meaning of the prophet. Some things in this book were fulfilled before the days of the fathers, and some things in the days wherein they lived; and both those they did clearly understand. Some things were fulfilled after their days, as the rising and reigning of the great Antichrist; which they did not so clearly see into. Hereupon it cometh to pass, that many things which unto them were very obscure, are unto us most clear and manifest, as being already fulfilled: insomuch, that all which are not wilfully blinded, may see and understand them; yea, even the most unlearned.

Be not therefore discouraged (gentle reader,) at the darkness and difficulty of this book; do not prematurely resolve and set down with thyself, that the natural sense of this book cannot be given, or the true meaning found out; and that we must, when we have done all that we can, rest in uncertain conjectures; some following one sense, and some another, as seemeth

most like and profitable. Oh, be not of that mind, good Christian brother! for if we have not an undoubted certainty of the sense and meaning of this prophecy, we are none the nearer: and that is it which the Papists would drive us into. But know for a certainty, that the natural sense of this book is to be found out, as well as of other books of the scripture. And that we might not be left to ourselves in the dark, and to our uncertain conjectures, and doubtful interpretations, behold the merciful goodness of God to his Church, in expounding himself the darkest and most mystical things in this prophecy, or at least so many of them, and so far, that the rest are thereby laid open, and made manifest. The Lord himself expounded some things in the first chapter, which give clear light to the first vision. The angel expoundeth divers other things. In the seventeenth chapter, which is the key of this prophecy, the angel doth of purpose open and interpret all the greatest doubts of this book: as, who is the whore of Babylon? who is the beast? what are his seven heads? what are his ten horns? what are the waters which the woman, that is, the whore of Rome, sitteth upon?

Moreover, for the better understanding of this prophecy, we must note, that the writings of Moses and the prophets, unto which there are sundry allusions, and from which sundry things are drawn, do explain many things in this revelation. The knowledge of antiquity ministereth much aid to the understanding of this prophecy. The knowledge of the histories of the Church, and the particular state thereof in divers ages, affordeth much light. The observation of the

phrases, and manner of speeck, used by the old prophets, doth also render great assistance. The serious and deep weighing of all the circumstances of the text, and comparing one thing with another, also help greatly to discover the true and natural sense. And furthermore, as the spirit of God is the author of this prophecy, so the same spirit is the best interpreter of it, and doth open and reveal it to all such as, using all other good means, are earnest and humble suitors unto God for his assistance, whereby they may all understand both this and the other mysteries of his will; which, the apostle saith, God hath revealed unto us by his spirit: for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. To all this may be added, the knowledge of arts, tongues, and the learned writings and interpretations of sundry excellent men, which do all give great assistance to the understanding of this prophecy. Since then there are so many helps for the opening and expounding of this revelation, why should any be discouraged from reading and studying it? But if any man demand a reason why St. John writeth this revelation in such a mystical and allegorical manner; I answer, that there may be many reasons given for it: first, that the world being blinded, might fulfil the things herein specified: secondly, because John was to publish this revelation as he received it from Jesus Christ, which was figuratively and allegorically: thirdly, because it was much wiser to foretel the destruction of the Roman Empire, which at that time bore the sway almost over the whole world, under covert and figurative speeches, than in plain terms, lest the Roman princes should rage still more

against the Christians. The like also may be said for Daniel's dark manner of delivering his prophecy: for if he had uttered those things in plain terms which he spake darkly and allegorically, it might have cost him his life. For the heathens would never have endured to hear that all their glorious and renowned empires should fall one after another, and one by another; and that the Jews were the only holy people whom God did defend, to whom, in the end, he would give quiet possession of their own land and kingdom.

But to come to a conclusion (gentle reader), thou shalt find in this poor attempt, first, an exposition of the first nineteen chapters reduced all to one head, which is to prove the five points; and, last of all, the three chapters following briefly and plainly expounded. If any through unwillingness will not, or through want of leisure cannot, read once this short exposition; yet, for his comfort, let him read those things only which are written upon the fourteenth chapter. And now (Christian reader), hoping that thou wilt not neglect that which may be for thine own good, I commend thee to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to give thee an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Thine in the Lord,

ARTHUR DENT

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